With the Best Intention

Bruno Lessing

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While the young couple were welcoming the rabbi, Lapidowitz swooped down upon the refreshment table

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By

Bruno Lessing

With Illustrations by
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I

The Schnorrer's Arrival

IT was wonderful how quietly the United States of America took the arrival of Moishe Gordonsky. No bells rang, no whistles blew, and nothing out of the ordinary happened; that is, nothing save the arrival of Moishe Gordonsky. He could not understand it. That so epoch-making an event should pass unnoticed seemed inexplicable to Moishe because, to him, this event meant the uprooting of the world, the changing of the entire solar system. Not that Moishe knew anything about either the world or the solar system; but nothing short of such an upheaval could adequately compare with his idea of the change in the existing order of things.

Moishe Gordonsky was eleven years old when he arrived. He came with his father and

mother and Chaim Lapidowitz, the schnorrer, from a tiny town in Lithuania, beyond the horizon of which his imagination had never before strayed. And now, here he was in the land of liberty and gold, the world rosy before him, the dreary past forever removed from his life; and no one seemed to take the slightest account of it. Moishe was disappointed.

Throughout the voyage Lapidowitz had regaled him with wonderful accounts of this new land. Lapidowitz himself had never travelled beyond the confines of his native village before, but he possessed a lively imagination and an amazing disregard for facts.

"It is a land of liberty and gold!" he said, time and time again. "You can find money everywhere—all you want. And you're free."

Strange to say, the idea of liberty appealed to Moishe even more than the idea of boundless gold. He was too young to love money, but he had already suffered from oppression. But now he was free! The dread monster of authority would oppress him no more. And gold was everywhere, too, the schnorrer had said.

A schnorrer, if you have never met one, is a member of a Jewish community who lives by his wits, never works if he can help it, knows

every line of the Torah and Talmud that can possibly be used as an appeal for charity, eats, drinks, wears, and smokes anything that is given to him, and is usually quite amiable. During most of his life Lapidowitz had begged and borrowed with strict impartiality from all his co-religionists in his native town, but, for nearly a year now, he had rather favoured Gordonsky. Gordonsky was good-hearted and gave gladly. He looked upon Lapidowitz as a cheerful good-for-nothing whom it was easier to feed than reform. And when, during the riots, it happened that the schnorrer appeared in Gordonsky's store in time to save Mrs. Gordonsky and Moishe from the fury of the mob, Gordonsky was content to take care of Lapidowitz to the end of his days. But the pillage of his store almost ruined him. There was barely enough money left to pay passage for his family to New York and to support them for a month or two while he found employment. And when the schnorrer begged to be taken along Gordonsky could not refuse.

At Castle Garden—this was before the day when immigrants began to land at Ellis Island—they were met by the Rabbi Zoline, head of the Lithuanian synagogue in New York to

which most of Gordonsky's fellow townsmen here belonged. He gathered together about forty prospective members of his congregation and helped them through the routine of governmental inspection.

"Now," said he, "the first thing you ought to do is to change all your Russian money for American money."

Lapidowitz, the schnorrer, drew a handful of money from his pocket.

"Where did you get that money?" cried Gordonsky in amazement. "I thought you didn't have anything!"

"I saved it," said the schnorrer sheepishly. "It was in case I got sick."

"And I kept giving you money, thinking you were poor! You're a *gonof* (thief). How much have you?"

"A hundred and fifty rubles," said the schnorrer. The sum was equivalent to about seventy-six dollars.

"Such a *gonof!*" said Gordonsky. "How could you be such a liar?"

"I wanted to surprise you," said Lapidowitz, quite crestfallen. "Maybe if there is a chance I go into business with you, and then we have

capital. That is," he added quickly, "if you put in as much."

"With a *gonof* I never go into partnership," said Gordonsky.

When all the immigrants had exchanged their money Rabbi Zoline formed them into a straggling procession and led them in the direction of the wilderness of tenements on the East Side that was henceforth to be their home. Lapidowitz walked beside the rabbi at the head of the procession, with Gordonsky close behind, grumbling at the schnorrer's perfidy.

The schnorrer, calmly indifferent to his benefactor's reproaches, was entirely absorbed in contemplating the Rabbi Zoline. The silk hat, the imposing frock coat, and the whole self-possessed bearing of the man fascinated the schnorrer. The gorgeous purple tie, the heavy, glittering watch-chain, and the gold-headed cane that he carried filled Lapidowitz with admiration. It was all in such sharp contrast to the slinking, ill-clad figures he had been accustomed to see in his Lithuanian Ghetto that the rabbi symbolised to him the whole spirit of liberty and wealth of this new land.

Moishe, with his eyes glued to the pavement,

brought up the rear of the procession. He was looking for money. Suddenly he gave a cry. A silver coin lay on the walk before him. The schnorrer had spoken the truth. Moishe eagerly seized the coin, but, even before he could pocket it, his eyes fell upon another and then another and another and another as though it had rained money that day—silver money of all denominations until his pockets were nearly full. A shadow fell across his path, and he looked up. It was the schnorrer.

"Your father sent me to find you," he said. "You'll get lost if you fall behind like that."

"Look!" cried Moishe, eagerly displaying a handful of the money. "I found all this in the street."

The schnorrer's mouth opened wide. "My, but you are lucky," said he. "I was so busy thinking of other things that I forgot all about the money. I guess I'll look, too."

Then, slowly, they walked together, the schnorrer even more eager than the boy. They found more money, and the schnorrer shouted with joy.

"In a few days we'll be rich men, Moishe," said he. "Then we'll buy a horse and carriage, and we'll never have to work again."

Presently the schnorrer stooped and picked up a roll of bills. "Look, Moishe!" he cried. "Paper money, too! Only I don't know how much it's worth. I'll have to ask the rabbi."

And then, it seemed, the godsend ceased. Search as they might, they could not find another cent. Block after block they walked, very slowly, and they were sure they had not overlooked a single square inch of the sidewalk. But their luck, for the day, was at an end. A policeman, who had been observing the two for several minutes, approached them.

"What's the trouble?" he asked. "Did you lose anything?"

They did not understand a word he said, but Moishe eagerly explained that they were looking for money. The policeman shook his head.

"I guess the East Side is the place you're looking for," he said. Then Moishe suddenly became aware that his parents and the rabbi and the rest of their party were no longer in sight.

"Let us hurry," he said, "or we'll get lost."

They walked as rapidly as they could, even ran at times, but when they reached Grand Street they realised that the others must have turned off into some side street, for they were

nowhere to be seen. The policeman at the corner of Grand Street and Broadway, however, was accustomed to directing newly arrived immigrants. They came by his post nearly every day; and he even knew a few words of Yiddish.

"Straight ahead," he said, pointing down Grand Street. "Keep straight ahead, and you'll get home."

They followed his direction, and in a little while they found themselves in a neighbourhood ablaze with lights and with signs bearing Hebrew characters on every side. And here, too, were so many of their countrymen, with unmistakable beards and ringlets and garments, that they both felt quite at home. But of their party there was no sign. In front of a clothing-store the schnorrer suddenly stopped.

"Moishe," he said, in a hoarse whisper, "I have a great idea. It will be some time before we find your papa and mamma. Let's go in here and spend some of the money we found. Let's each get a nice American suit of clothes, and then they'll all be surprised when they see us."

Moishe laughed merrily at the idea. "They won't even know us when they see us," he said. "We'll pretend we're Americans at first."

The proprietor of the store was one of the chosen people, and the schnorrer had little difficulty in making himself understood.

"You look like an honest man," said Lapidowitz. "We have just arrived to-day and do not know the right styles. I trust you to give us only the very best clothes that are worn here."

"My customers," said the proprietor, with an air of injured pride, "are the best people in New York."

The outfitting of Moishe and the schnorrer did not take long. In less than fifteen minutes they were transformed into different beings. Instead of looking like newly arrived immigrants, they looked as if they had lived in Hester Street all their lives. The clothier then took them to a friend of his who kept a hat-store across the street, where the schnorrer purchased a silk-hat, while Moishe became the possessor of a wonderful derby that came down to his ears. Then, each with a bundle containing his old clothes under his arm, they set forth to find their party. As they walked down the street, the schnorrer, with his silk hat tilted rakishly to one side, tried to imitate, as closely as he could, the walk and manner of the rabbi. At every store window that was dark enough to

serve the purpose of a mirror he paused to survey himself, and the view filled him with great satisfaction. As he came to a stop before one of these windows near a corner Moishe, walking a few feet ahead, thought he saw the rabbi and his party moving down a side street. As swiftly as his legs could carry him he ran after them, only to find that it was another rabbi—or a man who looked exactly like a rabbi—leading a wedding party. He retraced his steps, looked around him in bewilderment, and after running hither and thither for a few minutes realised that he had lost his companion. And then a great fear took hold of him. All thought of liberty and gold vanished from his mind, and he was only a little boy who wanted his father and his mother. Slowly a couple of tears rolled down his cheeks, followed by more until, losing all his dignity, he began to cry outright.

When a boy with a new derby hat and a bundle under his arm stands still and cries on the East Side, even to this day, a crowd quickly gathers. Moishe was soon surrounded by an inquiring group to whom, between sobs, he told his story, and when a policeman arrived there were a dozen to translate his tale of woe.

"He's losted! He's a greenhorn! He don't know where he lives!" they cried.

The policeman patted Moishe on the head and with a cheerful smile beckoned him to accompany him.

"Don't be scared," the crowd cried. "He'll take you to headquarters. They'll send out an alarm. You'll find your folks all right."

At the station house the sergeant who sat at the desk spoke Yiddish.

"Just hang round here a little while," he said to the boy. "Your folks will probably be here looking for you. If they don't I'll send you to headquarters. Don't be afraid. We'll take good care of you."

Moishe was no longer afraid and, in a little while, was roaming all over the station house. He saw a great many policemen in uniform sitting in one of the rooms, and at the foot of a flight of stairs he saw a row of cells. Why, the schnorrer was wrong! It was a country of gold, but the people weren't entirely free—they had men in uniform over them just as in Russia.

Moishe proudly showed the sergeant the money he had found.

"In the street?" cried the sergeant. "Holy smoke, but you're a lucky kid! Let's see it.

Sure enough, it's real money. I ought to keep it till the owner shows up, but I guess it's safe with you. Finding money in the street! Well, I'll be hanged!"

At that moment the door opened and in burst the Rabbi Zoline with Gordonsky at his heels. "A little boy got lost," began the rabbi excitedly, when the sergeant interrupted him by pointing to Moishe. The rabbi was about to deny that this was the lad they were looking for when Moishe, recognising his father, flew into his arms. But even Gordonsky had some doubts.

"Is it my Moishe?" he cried. "Where did you get all those fine clothes?"

"I found money in the street," said Moishe. "Look! Nearly a whole pocketful! And Mr. Lapidowitz found a lot, too. He found paper money."

"Where is Lapidowitz?" asked his father.

"I don't know. We got separated somewhere."

"Well," remarked his father, "I guess he is able to look after himself. He's a very smart man, and if I don't ever see him again I won't cry about it. You'd better let me keep your

money with mine, Moishe, because you might lose it."

He thrust his hand into his pocket to take out his own money, paused, turned pale, and beads of perspiration stood upon his forehead. He clutched the rabbi's arm.

"My money's gone!" he cried. "I've been robbed!"

"Where did you keep it? Are you sure you didn't put it in your satchel?" the rabbi asked.

"Never would I carry money in a bag. Look! In this pocket I put it. Didn't you see me do it, Moishe?"

He pulled his pocket inside out. The sergeant, leaning over the desk, pointed to it.

"Man alive!" he exclaimed, "you've got a hole in your pocket big enough for a house to fall through. And—well, I'll be jinked! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho! Ho!"

They all stared at him in amazement, and then, slowly, a smile crept into the rabbi's face. "Where did you find this money, Moishe?" he asked.

"In the street when I was walking away from the place where we got off the ship."

The sergeant continued to roar with laughter.

The rabbi laid his hand on Gordonsky's shoulder.

"I'm afraid," he said gently, "your son and his friend picked up the money that dropped out of your pocket."

"And the kid thought he was finding money in the street! Ho! Ho! Ho!" cried the sergeant. Then, seeing that no one joined in his laughter, and perceiving a tear trickle down Moishe's cheek as the disillusioning situation dawned on him, the sergeant became grave. "Cheer up!" he said. "You've got some of the money back, and maybe you'll get all the rest."

"The schnorrer!" cried Gordonsky. "Where is he? I must find him!"

He started for the door, but the rabbi restrained him.

"Wait a minute! You can't find a man in New York like that. Leave it to the police."

The sergeant summoned a detective and explained the situation to him. "You go along with these people and see if you can't find the other chap," he said.

As they left the station house the sergeant thrust something into Moishe's hand. "Put that in your pocket and don't look at it till you get home," said he.

In Grand Street they were fortunate enough to come upon the schnorrer's trail without much loss of time. A Yiddish push-cart vendor recognised the description at once.

"Dot's him," he said eagerly. "A stylish greenhorn. He says dot he vos vit a liddle boy vot got losted und vants to know vot he should do. Und I told him der policemens take always der losted childers to der station house unt keeps dem till der owners comes. So he says, 'Vell,' he says, 'den dere iss no hurry. I am losted, too,' he says, 'but I find myself unt der boy ven I gets finished vit my bizness,' he says. 'Vare,' he says, 'should I go to buy me a necktie—a big, fine vun?' I told him vere iss Rosenstein's store, unt maybe he iss dere now!"

Gordonsky groaned. "The *gonof!*" he muttered. "Not only a new suit but a necktie he must buy out of my money! Come," he said to the rabbi, "it is better we hurry before he spends it all!"

They hastened to Rosenstein's store. Yes, the schnorrer had been there.

"A purple necktie he bought—ah, yes—chust like der chentleman hass got on," said Mr.

Rosenstein, pointing to the rabbi's necktie. "Unt he wrote on a paper vot it cost."

"Did he say where he was going?" asked the detective.

"No. He ask me vare could he buy a nice vatch-chain, unt I said Levine's on Essex Street iss cheap unt reliable, but I don't know if he hass go dere!"

"A watch-chain!" groaned Gordonsky when this was translated to him. "The *gonof!* The liar! He will buy a house yet!"

Yes! He had been at Levine's! He had bought the heaviest, flashiest, imitation gold chain in the store.

"Ask him how much it cost," said Gordonsky. "Two dollars? Four rubles? Ach Gott! I kill him when I get him."

"Der chentleman," explained Mr. Levine, "wrote down the price on paper."

They found even further trace of the schnorrer. They learned, in the course of fifteen minutes' investigation, that he had bought himself a gold-headed cane, a red silk handkerchief, and a pair of shoes. And then he seemed to have dropped out of existence.

"I guess we can't do any more to-night," said the detective. "You'd better come back to the

station with me and give a good description of the chap. We'll send out an alarm for him, and I guess we'll find him easily."

They took Moishe home to his mother first and then returned to the station house. When they entered the station Gordonsky beheld his friend Lapidowitz, in glorious array, with a huge bundle under his arm, standing before the sergeant's desk, protesting volubly against his arrest.

"*Gonof!*" cried Gordonsky, springing forward. "Give me my money!"

"There he is!" cried the schnorrer eagerly. "He is my friend. Tell him, Gordonsky, how I got lost!"

"*Gonof*—" began Gordonsky, but Lapidowitz was too excited to hear him.

"Could it be vorse in Russia?" he cried. "Comes a policeman and asks what I have got in my bundle. And I say clothes. And where did I get my new things? And I say I buy them. And where did I get the money? On the street I find it like everyone else, I say. And where do I live? I don't know, I say. And then, just for nothing, here I am in prison. Tell him, Gordonsky! Tell him, Mr. Rabbi! I ain't a liar."

"My money! Where is my money?" cried Gordonsky.

"Your money?" asked Lapidowitz. "How do I know?"

"Listen!" said the rabbi. He began to explain the situation to Lapidowitz. The schnorrer did not seem to understand at first, and the rabbi began all over again. Then, slowly, the schnorrer's face turned very red. He understood. He took from his pocket what was left of the money he had found and, without a word, handed it to Gordonsky, who quickly counted it.

"Nearly fifty dollars are missing," said he.

"How much of the money did you spend?" asked the rabbi. The schnorrer drew from his pocket the slip of paper.

"Thirty-nine dollars," he said, addressing the sergeant as if to seek protection. The rabbi grinned. He knew the schnorrer type, well.

"Has he any money?" he whispered to Gordonsky.

"Sure he has. The *gonof!* Don't you remember he changed a hundred and fifty rubles?"

"That's so! Well, Mr. Lapidowitz, I'm

afraid you will have to give Mr. Gordonsky the money you spent."

The schnorrer gazed appealingly at the sergeant. "Yes," said the sergeant. "That's the law here."

Without a word Lapidowitz drew out his store of American money and counted out thirty-nine dollars, which he handed to Gordonsky. "Can I go now?" he asked the sergeant.

"Sure. You aren't arrested. The policeman just thought you were a suspicious character. But you're all right."

As they passed through the doorway the schnorrer turned to the sergeant. "In Russia they don't rob prisoners," he said.

"Cheer up," said the rabbi, as they walked homeward. "You have fine clothes, and Mr. Gordonsky has a fine room ready for you. There's nothing to worry so much about. You'll soon be earning money."

"I feel sick," said the schnorrer.

Gordonsky chuckled. "That's what you saved your money for, didn't you? In case of sickness?"

But there was no spirit of retort in Lapidowitz. When they reached the little apartment in the tenement that was thenceforth to

be their home, they found Moishe, still up, waiting for them.

"Oh, I'm so glad you found Mr. Lapidowitz!" he cried. "Look, papa, what the policeman gave me." He showed his father a bright half-dollar. "There isn't any money in the streets, and maybe you ain't free," he said, "but they're nice people."

"Fine people," said his father with a grin. "Hey, Lapidowitz?"

II

An Apple Wasted

LAPIDOWITZ, the schnorrer, selected the royal road to learning. His friend and benefactor, Gordonsky, after a hard day's work in the tailor shop, spent his evenings at the Beth Hamidrash, or study-house, of his synagogue, where a dapper young man taught a roomful of patriarchs to spell "cat," "dog," and "rat." Gordonsky was ambitious to learn English, but sometimes, during the lesson, he fell asleep from sheer fatigue. To little Moishe Gordonsky the road to learning was a dreary, precipitous trail, barren of joy and devoid of hope. The teacher whom he had adored had abandoned both him and the school to get married, and in her place had come a sandy-haired, unprepossessing female, whose personality had the effect of stirring up all that was rebellious in Moishe's nature. Lapidowitz spent most of his time loafing about the coffee-houses, declaring each night that he was making wonderful

progress in English and that, as soon as he could speak the language fluently, a lucrative position was waiting for him.

He always called on the Gordonskys at supper time. "What? Not through with dinner yet?" he would say. "I just thought I'd drop around to help Mrs. Gordonsky with the dishes. She must be so tired."

Then during the meal he would insist that his way of studying the language and the customs of this new land was far superior to Gordonsky's, to which Gordonsky invariably replied with a lengthy and detailed opinion of the schnorrer's laziness, mendacity, and utter uselessness, during which the schnorrer ate.

"What do you expect will become of you?" Gordonsky said one night. "You are the laziest man on the East Side. All day long you loaf around the coffee-houses, and then you come and sponge on your friends for a meal. How long do you think it will last?"

"Oh, a good while yet," Lapidowitz answered, unabashed. "I have other friends besides you."

"I wish you would stick to them," Gordonsky retorted. "I am tired of seeing your face. I am sorry that I ever brought you over here

from Russia. Never did I get the slightest thanks for it. Do you expect to be a schnorrer all your life?"

"I am thinking of getting married," replied Lapidowitz calmly, helping himself to another plate of lentil soup. "Already I spoke to a schatchen about it. Any lady at all I will take so long as she has money or can support me so that I can study."

"Marry? Study?" exclaimed Gordonsky. "You must be crazy. No woman who had eyes to look at you would dream of marrying you if she was in her senses. And if she did, all the studying you would ever do would be playing cards in the coffee-house all day long."

"Let papa talk," said the schnorrer, after winking gravely at little Moishe. "He thinks he's the only smart man in the world, but some day I'll show him."

There was quite a bond of affection between the schnorrer and the little boy, due, probably, to the fact that Lapidowitz always took the lad seriously, and frequently had long talks with him. But Moishe only grinned. The idea of a woman marrying the schnorrer struck him as being funny.

During the year that had elapsed since the

Gordonskys arrived in New York from Russia, Moishe had acquired a stanch friend, a fluent command of Ghetto English, and a perfect confidence in himself. The timidity that is bred in Jewish children in Russian towns disappears quickly in the streets of New York.

His friend and ally was Davy Levine. Moishe met Davy Levine in the school classroom and asked him what he intended to be when he grew up.

"A millionaire," said Davy. "What are you?"

"President from the United States," said Moishe.

"You can't," replied Davy. "Jews can't be President. They got to be Krists."

"You're a liar," retorted Moishe, whereupon Davy smote him one upon the nose. There was a fight that delighted the hearts of half the school that witnessed it, and then Davy and Moishe, disheveled, both bleeding from the nose, but throughly unabashed, were brought before their teacher. They loved their teacher, and when she had lectured them they felt ashamed of themselves. So they shook hands and made up, and after that they were good friends.

It is a curious relation that exists between an

East Side school-teacher and her Yiddish hopefuls. Fresh from the dark and dreary surroundings of their Russian Ghetto, their teacher is usually the first representative of all the glories of this new land with whom they come in close contact, and if she be a Gentile, as was in those days usually the case, she typifies to them the whole alien world that surrounds their new Ghetto. If she be of a sympathetic nature, with a heart responsive to the appeal of childhood, her influence is boundless. If, on the other hand, she be one of that tribe of spinsterhood to whom children are mysteries, she seems to bring out the worst that is in them, and frequently does no little mischief.

Moishe's first teacher was now gone, and in her place was one whom the pupils always referred to formally as Miss Fraser. Her predecessor had been "Teacher." And whether it was merely the exuberance of boyish spirits bubbling over after long repression, or whether there was something in the personality of this sharp-featured, snappy-tongued woman that acted as an irritant upon the pupils, the class became unruly, and the worst of them all was Moishe Gordonsky. Day after day all the deviltry in his nature came uppermost, and in the

thousand and one indescribable ways that only boys know, he almost drove the teacher to distraction. But Miss Fraser was stubborn. There was Scotch blood in her, and she felt confident that in the end she would subdue that brood.

Many a talk did Moishe and his friend Davy have over this intolerable condition.

"What's the use?" Moishe would say. "A feller can't have no more fun."

"She's a homely mug," Davy would answer. "I wish Teacher was back."

"Teacher used to learn us something, but by Miss Fraser I don't learn nothing and got to work all the time."

Which, by the way, was not strictly true. As a matter of fact, the class made better progress under Miss Fraser than under her beloved predecessor, but there was more friction. One day when Moishe had dropped a piece of chewing-gum down a boy's neck the teacher only smiled. At the close of school, however, she handed him a note.

"Give this to your father," she said.

Moishe had already forgotten the chewing-gum incident, and that night, without a shadow of suspicion, he gave the note to his father.

"What says it?" asked Gordonsky, turning it over helplessly.

Moishe shook his head. "I tried to read it but couldn't," he said. "It's something about a sheep. Maybe she got one what she wants to sell."

Gordonsky took the note with him to the Beth Hamidrash that evening and, ere his lesson began, asked the instructor to read it to him. It ran:

Dear Sir:

Your son is the black sheep of my class, and I am unable to do anything with him. I wish you would come to see me at your convenience. I think, between us, we may induce him to devote more thought to his studies and less to the pranks he is always playing.

"Oy! Oy!" cried Gordonsky. "My son a black sheep! Only last week I asked him how he was getting along in the school, and he said 'Fine.' And to play jokes I send him to school! To-night you excuse me, teacher? I got to go straight home."

Home he went and, without a word of explanation, administered to Moishe the treatment advocated by Solomon.

"What is the matter?" cried Mrs. Gordonsky and the schnorrer in one breath.

"A black sheep he is!" exclaimed the father. "Instead of getting smart in school he gets fresh, and the teacher writes me a letter."

"The Talmud says you should be eager to acquire knowledge," said the schnorrer gently to Moishe.

"I'm too busy to see the teacher," Gordonsky said to Lapidowitz; "suppose you go in the morning and talk with her. Tell her I got to work, but you only got to loaf all day."

"Sure I go," said the schnorrer.

So it happened that the next morning while Miss Fraser's class was struggling to understand why six times two are twelve the door opened and Lapidowitz, in shiny frock coat, entered the classroom. The moment he beheld Miss Fraser a look of profound admiration came into his eyes. There was something in her combative, self-assertive aura that appealed to him.

"Moishe Gordonsky—" he began.

"Oh, yes," said Miss Fraser. "You're his father. Well, if I were in your place I'd give that boy a spanking every day for a week. All this morning he has been making pinwheels out

of the pages of his arithmetic book, and he pays no more attention to what I say than if I were talking to the wall. He isn't a stupid boy by any means. He's just full of mischief, and I won't have any mischief in my classroom."

The schnorrer's eyes never left her face. When she paused for breath he said, with an ingratiating smirk:

"I ain't his papa. I ain't married at all. His papa got to work, so I came. I never got married."

Miss Fraser stared at him. "Well, I guess you can take my message to his father," she said. "The boy needs severe discipline at home."

She turned her back and resumed her talk to the class. Lapidowitz hesitated, walked slowly to the door, hesitated again, and, with a cough, turned towards her. "No," he said, twirling his silk hat between his fingers, "I never got married. It's nice to have a home."

Then he sighed and walked out. After school that day it chanced that Moishe and Davy on their way home met Teacher and her husband. They were delighted to behold her and overjoyed when she presented them to her husband as two of her favourite pupils.

"And how are you getting on now?" she asked.

"Rotten," replied Moishe glibly. "Miss Fraser's no good!"

"Oh, Moishe, you mustn't talk like that," chided Teacher.

"She's always writing letters so I get lickings," replied Moishe.

"And she's sassy," chimed in Davy. "She ain't like you."

"Cheer up, boys," said Teacher's husband, laughing. "Maybe she'll get married soon and you'll have better luck with the next one."

That night at supper Gordonsky asked the schnorrer what the teacher had said. Lapidowitz chuckled.

"She thought I was Moishe's papa," he said. "But I told her I wasn't married. How much do teachers get for wages, Moishe?"

"Imbecile!" exclaimed Gordonsky. "Tell me what she said about Moishe."

"Oh, she says he isn't a stupid boy. She says he makes fine pinwheels. Maybe, Moishe, if we get some fancy paper you make pinwheels and we sell them. What is the teacher's name?"

"Did she say he was a black sheep?" asked Gordonsky.

"She didn't talk about sheep," replied the schnorrer. "She said Moishe is all right, only he ain't stupid. She's a fine woman, Gordonsky. A good business face. In a store she'd make a man rich. Where does she live, Moishe?"

The next morning Moishe, on his way to school, met the schnorrer.

"My, what a fine surprise," exclaimed Lapidowitz. "Are you going to school? Here's a nice apple you can give the teacher. Tell her Mr. Lapidowitz says she's a fine woman."

"She's no good," said Moishe. "Teacher's husband says she ought to get married and then maybe we get a good teacher."

"Yes?" exclaimed Lapidowitz. He stroked his beard thoughtfully. A sudden idea seized Moishe.

"Maybe if you marry her," he cried, "we'll get a new teacher. Will the schatchen let you?"

"The schatchen has with school-teachers nothing to do," explained the schnorrer, "but I tell you what, Moishe, you're a smart boy. You got a fine brain. You give her the apple and

ask her if she likes me. Don't say I said it. And then you tell me what she says. I'll wait outside till you come out of school."

During the morning session Moishe, holding a book before his face so that the teacher would not see him, whispered to his friend Davy his brilliant plan.

"Maybe if she goes for to marry him we get a teacher what ain't a crank," he explained. "He gave me a apple to give her."

"Moishe Gordonsky," cried Miss Fraser, "step up to the blackboard and stand with your back to the class for one hour. This whispering has to stop."

Moishe gritted his teeth and submitted to his punishment, although every time that he felt the teacher was not observing him he turned his head stealthily and made faces at her. At the noon recess the schnorrer, waiting for Moishe outside the school, beheld him come out munching the apple.

"Just for spite I didn't give it to her," said Moishe, explaining what had happened.

"Ts! Ts! Moishe, you shouldn't do it. She's a fine lady—a fine, smart, business brain she got. Come, you keep the apple! I buy another one what you give to her. Yes?"

That afternoon Moishe approached the teacher's desk and laid down the apple. "From Mr. Lapidowitz," he said.

"Who is he?" asked Miss Fraser, in surprise.

"He's a schnorrer," explained Moishe.

"A schnorrer?" asked Miss Fraser, bewildered. "What's that?"

Moishe shook his head. A schnorrer was a schnorrer—beyond that it was too difficult to explain. But Davy's hand went up.

"I know what it is," he cried proudly. The teacher looked at him. Davy rose, clasped his hands behind his back, and in the monotonous tone of a pupil reciting his lesson, "A schnorrer," said he, "is a bum what don't work and ain't no good."

Fifty little heads solemnly nodded approval, and fifty pairs of eyes gazed inquiringly at the teacher as if to ask whether she now understood what a schnorrer was. Miss Fraser, with crimson cheeks, turned to Moishe.

"Is that what he is—the man that sent this apple?"

"Sure," said Moishe, "a schnorrer."

"This is amazing," said Miss Fraser. "I

can't understand it. Who is he? Why did he send me the apple?"

"He's gone by the schatchen for a wife," explained Moishe, "but he says you're nice and maybe he'll marry you."

The classroom swam before the teacher's eyes, amazement and indignation almost choked her. Then she seized Moishe by the arm. "Come," she said, "this is too much." She led the frightened lad before the principal. "Miss Robinson," she cried, "I really cannot have this boy in my class any longer. He is the worst boy in the school. I have just been insulted in the most horrible manner."

Miss Robinson was over fifty—an age at which even a spinster obtains a wider view of the bigness of life and its problems—and she had had much experience, both with pupils and with teachers. She gazed at Moishe reproachfully.

"Do you know what an insult is?"

"No, missus," said Moishe.

"H'm! An insult is something wicked and not nice. Do you think a little boy ought to say something bad to his teacher?"

Moishe's eyes opened wide in indignant pro-

test. "I didn't say nothing bad," he cried. "I said something nice, and she grabbed me by the arm."

"What did he say?" Miss Robinson asked the teacher.

Miss Fraser turned red. "I should dislike very much to repeat it," she said firmly.

Miss Robinson gazed at her. "You may return to your class," she said finally. "Leave the boy here. I'll attend to the matter."

When Miss Fraser had departed, the principal smiled at Moishe. In that smile lay all that was needed to establish firm and confidential relations between the two. Moishe suddenly realised that the principal was just like Teacher, and his heart expanded.

"Now, tell me," said Miss Robinson. "You look like a bright boy and a good boy. Tell me about it."

"Yes, missus," said Moishe. "Always Miss Fraser sasses us and sends letters by my father so's I get lickings. So I meets Teacher with her man, and he says maybe if Miss Fraser gets married we get a better teacher. So the schnorrer gets stuck on her and says he don't care for what the schatchen says. So he gives me a

apple what I give Miss Fraser and I says, he says she's nice and she can get married, and she gets mad. Honest, I didn't do nothin'!"

Miss Robinson's face became very red with suppressed emotions. She turned her back upon Moishe and sat for quite a while trembling, Moishe thought. Then she said:

"Go into Miss Wilkins's class. Tell her I sent you there."

When he had departed Miss Robinson looked out the window. Leaning against a lamp-post on the opposite side of the street she saw a tall, lank figure, frock coated and bearded, smoking a cigarette and waiting with the patience of Job.

"Oh, Lord!" she exclaimed. Then she sat down and wrote a note to Miss Fraser.

"I am deeply sorry that you were so annoyed," she wrote. "I have made the boy see the enormity of his offence. He seems quite bright, and I have advanced him to Miss Wilkins's class so that you will not be bothered with him any longer."

Then she looked out of the window again. Lapidowitz was lighting another cigarette. Miss Robinson sank into a chair and laughed until the tears rolled down her face.

On the opposite side of the street was a tall, lank figure, frock coated and bearded, waiting with the patience of Job

III

Lapidowitz's List

PEOPLE who possess the gift of expression usually like to talk, and when Lapidowitz, the schnorrer, frowned and told Milken not to bother him, Milken lit a cigar and calmly seated himself at the table where Lapidowitz sat making notes in a memorandum book. Milken liked Lapidowitz and knew that, presently, Lapidowitz would tell him what it was all about, for Lapidowitz was a glib talker and was rarely quiet for any great length of time.

It was in Milken's coffee-house that this took place. Lapidowitz, who lived entirely by his wits, had almost exhausted his credit, and Milken had been looking forward to a convenient opportunity to ask him when he intended to settle. The little coffee-house was almost deserted when Lapidowitz came in and, without seeming to notice the proprietor, seated himself at a table making entries in his note-book. Milken, having nothing else to do, watched him in silence for a while and then, approaching, asked:

"Vot iss der matter, Lapidowitz? Counting up how much you owe me?"

"Sh-h-h!" said Lapidowitz. "I'm busy now. Go avay!"

It was then that Milken seated himself at the table and waited. He had not long to wait.

"I guess I go into bizness," said Lapidowitz after a while.

"Vot kind of bizness?" asked Milken.

"A newspaper-stand. I know vare vun iss vot I can get cheap. Only tventy-five dollars."

"Vare iss der tventy-five dollars coming out uf?" asked Milken.

Lapidowitz gravely opened his memorandum-book and showed a list of names and figures. "You see," he explained, "first unt last, alvays, I'm a bizness man. Here iss der friends vot I got unt how much I am sure vot dey vill lend."

"Am I on der list?" asked Milken anxiously.

Lapidowitz shook his head. "Not on dis list," said he. "Here I only borrow to eat unt to drink. For money I don't ask."

Milken felt relieved. "Who iss on der list?" he asked.

"Vell," said Lapidowitz, "I got Sammis down for two dollars. He gave me a overcoat

last vinter. Unt by Gordonsky I can alvays borrow a dollar unt a halluf. Six people I got down for a dollar. By Rosenheim I'm alvays good for two dollars. Nearly efryvare I can get fifty cents. But Lubarsky iss der big vun. Him I got down for ten dollars."

"Lubarsky?" asked Milken, incredulous.

"Sure," said Lapidowitz stoutly. "Ain't he a rich vun?"

"Rich, yes," said Milken. "But so stingy. Vot makes you t'ink he iss good for ten dollars?"

"Ven I tell him I got him on der list for ten dollars," vouchsafed Lapidowitz confidently, "you can make a bet he lends me ten dollars. Anyvay," he added, "v'y shouldn't he?"

To this Milken made no answer, but his respect for Lapidowitz was greatly increased, for he saw clearly that Lapidowitz was a business man. He decided to say nothing about the little account between them until Lapidowitz had purchased his news-stand. Then, if the worst came to the worst, he could take it out in papers.

"Let me know how comes it all out," he said, as Lapidowitz departed.

The schnorrer found Lubarsky in his real-estate office, reading the daily list of sales, mort-

gages, and *lis pendens*. "Mister Lubarsky," he began, with an ingratiating smirk, "I haf a good bizness proposition got. If I haf tventy-five dollars I can buy a good newspaper-stand vare I can make lots uf money. So, maybe, you lend me ten dollars? Yes?"

Lubarsky bit off the end of a cigar and gazed intently at Lapidowitz. "Lend you ten dollars?" he asked slowly. "Are you *meshuga* (crazy)?"

Lapidowitz drew himself up proudly. "No," he said, "I am not *meshuga*. But you are *meshuga*. Ven comes a man vot iss honest unt asks you to do him a favour iss dot der vay to talk? I say to myself, 'Lubarsky,' I say, 'iss a honest man unt a good man. He knows der Torah unt der Talmud by heart, unt he knows all vot it says about charity to der poor. So,' I says, 'Lubarsky sure vill lend me ten dollars.' Now iss it all a mistake?"

"Yes," said Lubarsky. "It iss. Unt vot's more, der qvicker you go avay der more happier I vill be."

Lapidowitz took off his overcoat and laid it upon a chair. Then he carefully deposited his hat and his cane on top of his overcoat. Then he drew a chair close to Lubarsky and began to

talk. At first Lubarsky continued to read his paper. Lapidowitz coaxed, wheedled, begged, and implored. Lubarsky seemed to pay no heed to him. Then Lapidowitz began to argue, to expound, to lay down the law, and present the whole matter from the broadest possible standpoint. Lubarsky dropped his paper and looked at him. Then Lapidowitz went into the possibility of a really final and absolute refusal on Lubarsky's part, explained the consequences, and exhausted the list of curses that might be invoked upon Lubarsky's head. Not only did he exhaust the curses of the Talmud and the Cabala and the long line of rabbinical experts incursing, but added a few original ones that made Lubarsky admire his imagination.

"Say," said Lubarsky, when he had finished, "you are a good talker. For a loafer vot alvays vas too lazy to vork you really talk very fine. But if you talk six t'ousand years, nefer vould I lend you ten dollars. Because v'y? Because dots der end uf der ten dollars. But I got a idea. If you are a man vot I can trust I gif you a chance to make ten dollars. See? You scratch my back, I scratch yours. You get der idea? You do me a favour unt I do vun for you. Only I must trust you."

With his arm extended ceilingward Lapidowitz swore that he could be trusted.

"Listen," said Lubarsky. "Mrs. Lubin vot lives on Delancy Street—she iss a vidder, you know—six times I ask her to marry me, unt always she says no. Because v'y? Because she says she don't care to get married no more. If she gets married, she says I am der best vun unt she marries me. But she guesses it's better maybe not to marry nobody. Now, you go unt haf a talk vit' her unt tell her it's better to get married. If you talk haf so good vit' her as you talk vit' me, ve get married right avay. Den I gif you ten dollars unt maybe, somet'ing extra. Iss it a bargain?"

It was a bargain. Although Lapidowitz had never laid eyes on the woman, he did not even pause to ask for a letter of introduction. Lapidowitz always introduced himself. He hastened to the widow Lubin. When he beheld her he gasped. This beautiful dark-eyed creature marry Lubarsky? Perish the thought! And she must be well-to-do! The carpets were of fine quality, and the furniture looked expensive.

"Mrs. Lubin," said Lapidowitz, with his most winning smile, "I haf come from Mister Lubar-

"I haf come from Mister Lubarsky. Ve are great friends, unt he is so anxious to get married vit' you"

sky. Ve are great friends, unt he is so anxious to get married vit' you dot he asks me to see you unt tell him if he ain't right."

"He iss too fresh," said Mrs. Lubin, with twinkling eyes. "But maybe if you sit down I make a cup of tea for you!"

While Mrs. Lubin was preparing the tea, Lapidowitz figured that the furnishings of the sitting-room were worth at least $350 at a forced sale. And then an idea came to him.

"Mrs. Lubin," he said, when she returned, "v'en I go back to my friend Lubarsky I gif him a t'ousand thanks for der opportunity uf laying my eyes on such a face. Ach! I am a lonely man! Ladies vit' beautiful faces iss not for me!" And he sighed a heavy sigh.

Mrs. Lubin was very sympathetic. "Don't you ever go by der the-yater?" she asked. "I hear der iss a lufly play in Grand Street vot iss called 'Der Rose uf Sharon.' Maybe if you see it der loneliness vill go avay. I haf never seen it."

"Iss it too much if I ask you to go vit' me unt ve forget our loneliness togedder?" asked Lapidowitz audaciously.

Mrs. Lubin beamed upon him. "You haf der

kindest heart uf any man I know," she said. "I am crazy to go. Ve go to-night."

Was there a ray of tenderness in the glance that she bestowed upon Lapidowitz or did he only imagine it? At any rate, his heart beat a trifle faster. He rose.

"I go now unt get der tickets," he said. "To-night at eight o'clock I call for you."

As soon as he had reached the sidewalk Lapidowitz consulted his list. "I guess Sammis iss der nearest," he said. "He iss good for two dollars."

"Sammis," he said, when he had located his victim, "I haf der greatest need uf five dollars. You are der friend uf my life. As der Talmud says, 'He who gifs vit' a open heart—' "

"Never mind der Talmud," said Sammis, drawing a greasy wallet from his pocket. "Here iss two dollars unt not a cent more, Talmud or no Talmud. Unt don't come again dis year."

From two other sources Lapidowitz borrowed fifty cents, and at the appointed time, presented himself at the Widow Lubin's with the theatre tickets in his pocket. When he beheld her attired in holiday raiment, he gazed at her speechless for a moment. Then,

"In your Shabbas clothes, lady," said he, "you look like a angel."

"Oh, you men say such nice things!" replied the widow.

During the climax of the performance her hand, quite accidentally, fell upon that of Lapidowitz, and the touch thrilled him.

"Maybe, to-morrow night," he whispered, "you come unt have supper vit' me? Yes?"

"At Shinkman's? Vare alvays der roast goose iss so good? Vit' pleasure!" responded the widow.

Did Lapidowitz only imagine it or did she actually bestow upon his hand the tiniest little squeeze? At any rate, the following morning Lapidowitz, after going over his list, called upon Gordonsky, Cohen, Simkovitch, and Gulden and gathered two dollars and seventy-five cents. With this money that evening he purchased more roast goose than he had ever seen before at one time in all his life.

As if roast goose were the sesame that opened the flood-gates of her heart, the widow Lubin, during this meal, confided to Lapidowitz the story of her life and the yearnings of her innermost soul. Why is it that a square meal usually overcomes a woman's natural reticence?

What is there in common between a sirloin steak and a woman's soul-strings? If all the sirloin steaks and broiled blue-fish that ever were served to a man and woman, tête-à-tête, were to reveal the confidences they overheard, *en passant,* what an encyclopedia of feminine psychology it would make!

These, however, are only the speculations of the narrator. They did not enter Lapidowitz's head. Lapidowitz, that afternoon, had learned that the late Mr. Lubin had left his widow two tenement houses, and tenement houses interested Lapidowitz more than philosophy.

"You like Mister Lubarsky?" he asked suddenly.

The widow laid down the breast-bone of a goose and looked straight into Lapidowitz's eyes. "I hate him!" she said.

Lapidowitz was happy. "Listen, Mrs. Lubin—Esther, dot iss your name, ain'd it? Gordonsky told me he seen it on a mortgage vunce! Dere iss somet'ing I vould like to say."

"Not to-night, Mr. Lapidowitz," said the widow hastily. "Not to-night. Pl-e-e-e-ease!" (Don't all women do that well!) "For my sake. Day after to-morrow I go out for a car-

riage ride vit' you if you like, unt den you can tell me. But not to-night!"

There's another thing! How do they sense it so far off?

"A carriage ride?" said Lapidowitz, slightly dazed.

"Sure," said the widow eagerly. "Ve go for a nice ride in der Central Park—you unt me, alone—unt you tell me efryt'ing you know about yourself!"

The beaming, melting, soulful glance that accompanied this declaration almost made Lapidowitz's heart stop working.

"Dot's a good idea!" he said. "At two o'clock I come vit' a carriage to your house!"

"Not to my house," said the widow hastily. "Come here—in front uf Shinkman's—unt vait! You know how efrybody talks if a carriage comes to my house!"

They refused to let Lapidowitz have a carriage for less than seven dollars, and when one o'clock came Lapidowitz had raised only five dollars and had almost exhausted his list. But time was flying and he could scurry around no longer. At two o'clock he was sitting in the carriage in front of Shinkman's.

People stopped to look at him. Except in cases of funerals and weddings, carriages rarely stand for any length of time in front of houses on the East Side.

The carriage waited nearly an hour. Then Lapidowitz said to the driver,

"You vait here unt I go 'round der corner to see vot keeps der lady."

"I'll drive ye around," said the driver curtly.

So he drove him around. And Mrs. Lubin was not at home.

"Say," said the driver, "the longer I wait the more it'll cost. Don't ye want to take that drive around the park?"

"Alone?" asked Lapidowitz. "Vot's der use! Vait a minute."

He consulted his list. He had exhausted nearly all its possibilities excepting Lubarsky. The ten dollars next to Lubarsky's name stood out in monumental bigness. What could be keeping the widow? An idea suddenly came to him. He would need more money anyway. He entered Shinkman's.

"If comes a lady to ask for me," said he, "I come right back. Tell her to vait." And to the driver. "To Mister Lubarsky's, the

real-estater," he said, settling back comfortably on the cushioned seat.

A red-haired, freckled-faced boy greeted him in Lubarsky's office. "Mister Lubarsky?" he repeated. "He ain'd! He iss out!"

"Out vare?" asked Lapidowitz impatiently.

The boy looked at the office clock. "Vare he iss now I don't know," he said. "Ten minutes ago he was getting married by der rabbi's!"

Lapidowitz, a chill creeping down his spine, stared at the lad. "Getting married?" he repeated. "Vit' who?"

"Some vidow lady," said the boy.

Lapidowitz took off his hat and wiped the perspiration from his brow. Then he fanned himself with his hat and loosened his collar to relieve the sensation of choking that had suddenly come over him. Then, "V'en comes back Mister Lubarsky," he said, very slowly and deliberately, "you tell him dot Mister Lapidowitz vos here. Unt say dot Mister Lapidowitz says dot Mister Lubarsky iss a loafer unt a swindler!"

"Where to?" asked the driver, when Lapidowitz had flung himself into the carriage.

"To Milken's coffee-house on Essex Street," said Lapidowitz.

A few minutes later he had his hands on Milken's shoulders. "My friend," he said solemnly, "you know how I feel about you! You know how nefer before I haf borrowed money off'n you. You know vot says der Talmud about—"

"Nefer mind all dot," said Milken. "How much iss der smallest?"

"T'ree dollars I got to haf!" said Lapidowitz.

Milken went to the cash-drawer and took out three dollars. "I don't see," he remarked sarcastically, "v'y you come to me for t'ree dollars so long as you haf on der list a rich man like Lubarsky."

"Lubarsky," said Lapidowitz haughtily, "iss off der list!"

IV.

"From Him That Hath Not"

LAPIDOWITZ sat in Milken's coffee-house waiting for something to turn up. Lapidowitz was "on his uppers." That is hardly what you would call a pretty figure of speech, but it conveys an accurate and comprehensive idea of Lapidowitz's condition. His credit among his friends was exhausted—even Milken was beginning to grumble at the amount of coffee and cake that Lapidowitz's unpaid account represented—and the schnorrer, plunged in gloom, was at last face to face with the painful necessity of going to work.

Then Janowski, the coal-dealer, entered the coffee-house, nodded smilingly to Lapidowitz, and seated himself at the opposite side of the room. Janowski wore a diamond scarf-pin and jingled when he walked. Lapidowitz hated Janowski. He hated his unvarying air of prosperity. He hated the clink of the loose change that Janowski carried in every pocket. He

hated Janowski's calmness, his smile, his air of confidence. The secret of his bitter detestation was that he owed Janowski two dollars, had owed them for two months, and had never since been able to borrow any more.

So Lapidowitz would sit and glare at Janowski, and his thoughts would run like this:

"Curses on my luck! Why should I be poor and he be rich? I am smarter than he is, and superior to him in every way, yet here I am with no better prospect than to go to work in a tailor shop, while he does not know what to do with all the money he makes. Curses on my luck!"

Janowski, blissfully ignorant of the injustice of fate, sipped his coffee in peace. When he had finished he drew from his inside pocket a thick roll of bills, paid for his coffee, and swept the change into his trousers pockets. Then, with a nod to Lapidowitz and a pleasant smile, he walked, jingling as he went, out of the place.

Lapidowitz sighed, lit a fresh cigarette, and waited for something to turn up.

"Wait—wait patiently," says the Talmud, "and something is sure to turn up." You may be pleased, or you may be disappointed, but, nevertheless, something will turn up. Lapidowitz waited—waited patiently, and one after-

noon something turned up. It was the unexpected. The unexpected comes to all of us once or twice in a lifetime, and, usually, we bungle it.

The postman brought Lapidowitz a letter from Russia. It ran:

Worthy Sir:

My dear uncle Isidore Malakoff died in Minsk last week. In his will he left all his silverware to Mrs. Raviner, his former housekeeper. We found that Mrs. Raviner died many years ago and that you are her only living relative. So please let me know what you wish done with the silverware. We can send it to you if you will pay for the transportation or we can sell it here at the best price and send you the money.

With the highest esteem, yours,

SAMUEL MALAKOFF.

For a full five minutes Lapidowitz sat transported to the supreme heights of bliss. At last fate had recognised his merits and was prepared to do him justice. Then, slowly, he came down to earth, and began to calculate. He had never in his life heard of Malakoff, but he remembered, dimly, that either his mother or his father had had an aunt named Raviner whom, to the best of his recollection, he had never seen.

But the silverware—how much was it worth?

Was it one of those wonderful collections, the accumulation of generations, that, he so frequently read in the newspapers, brought fabulous prices at sales? Or—no, it would never do to speculate upon the possibility of a disappointment. It was surely worth five hundred dollars. No silverware worth leaving in a will could possibly be worth less. Two hundred dollars, anyway—and even one hundred dollars would be sufficient to change the whole current of his life.

His dream of a year had been to open an account in Goldsinger's bank on Grand Street and sign checks with a long, heavy flourish to his signature.

But Russia was far off, and several weeks must elapse before he could receive his inheritance. Lapidowitz hastily made a list of his friends who would be likely to advance him some money on the strength of his new prospects. It seemed easy. How could any one refuse money to a man who had inherited a collection of silverware? He set forth bravely and called upon Gordonsky.

"Not one cent," said Gordonsky.

"But the silverware is worth a thousand dollars," said Lapidowitz.

"I don't care if it's worth a million," replied Gordonsky. "For two years I have lent you money. When you begin to pay, then we will talk. Not before. Better go to work."

He tried Lubarsky. Lubarsky read the letter carefully.

"Have you ever seen this silverware?" he asked.

"Sure I have," said Lapidowitz glibly. "The way it shines is wonderful. It's the finest collection of silverware in Russia."

"All right," said Lubarsky. "Get it over to New York and I will look at it. Then we will talk business."

Lapidowitz tried nearly every one he knew, and finally returned to Milken's coffee-house, dejected.

"Fools!" he exclaimed. "When I had nothing they made no fuss about lending me a few dollars. Now that I am rich they will not lend me a penny. But how they will come crawling around when I come into my inheritance."

And at that moment Janowski came jingling into the coffee-house, nodded smilingly to Lapidowitz, and seated himself at the opposite side of the room. Lapidowitz gazed at him for a

long time. Then he crossed the room and sat down at Janowski's table.

"Mr. Janowski," he began, "I have a business proposition."

"Indeed?" said Janowski. "You owe me two dollars."

Lapidowitz cast a look of reproach upon him. "I am surprised," he said, "that a big man like you should talk of such little things."

"Business," said Janowski, "is all little things. You owe me two dollars for a long time."

Without a word Lapidowitz handed him the letter he had received.

"Who is this Samuel Malakoff?" asked Janowski.

"Samuel Malakoff?" repeated Lapidowitz airily. "Why, he's the nephew of the famous silverware collector—old Malakoff. Did you never hear of him?"

Janowski read the letter again and handed it back to the schnorrer. "Well, what is your proposition?" he asked.

"Mr. Janowski," said Lapidowitz, in his most earnest tone, "listen to me. I am going to write to Russia to sell the collection and send me the money. In a few weeks I will be rich and have

an account in Goldsinger's bank. But now I need some money. If I had money now I could buy myself some nice clothes. Then I could get a job by Mr. Rosen the fire insurance man, who says I'm a great fellow for going out and getting fire insurance. But he won't give me a job unless I have nice clothes. A bum, he says, is no use in the insurance business. So if you will let me have fifty dollars now—forty dollars —thirty would be enough—to-morrow I get the job and so soon as the money comes over I will give you a check on Goldsinger's bank."

Janowski fumbled in his pockets for a while and drew out a sheet of blank paper which he handed to Lapidowitz.

"Write first," he said, " 'I owe Mr. Janowski two dollars,' and put your name under it. Then we talk business."

Lapidowitz, in haughty silence, wrote the statement and signed it.

"Now," said Janowski, handing Lapidowitz another sheet of paper, "write, 'I owe Mr. Janowski thirty dollars which I promise honestly to give him a check for as soon as I get money from Russia.' "

Lapidowitz joyfully wrote this promise and,

handing it to Janowski, received from him thirty dollars.

"Now, Mr. Lapidowitz," said Janowski, "you're a smart man, and I'd like to see you get along, only, when it comes to business, they all say you borrow but don't pay. What they say, though, makes no difference to me. All I know is you owe me two dollars for a long time, and you never paid a cent. This time, when you get your money in the bank, you pay. If you don't pay—don't worry. I will get the money. I am a smart man, too."

The next day Lapidowitz issued forth in a wonderfully brilliant silk hat, a new Prince Isaac coat, new shoes, a new scarf, a heavy watch-chain, and a gorgeous scarf-pin. How he managed to do it all on thirty dollars was little short of miraculous. He applied to Rosen for the promised position.

A few days later he handed Milken one of his new cards. "Abraham Lapidowitz, Fire Insurance Agent," it read.

Milken gazed at him in awe. "You will be getting rich," he said.

"Sure," said Lapidowitz. "And if you lend me two dollars you are sure of getting back everything I owe you soon."

Milken lent him the two dollars, and that was the last that Milken saw of him for three weeks. That very day Lapidowitz received a draft from Russia for forty-two dollars. The accompanying letter, declaring that "I obtained a good price for the silverware," he tore into a hundred bits. All that evening he sat in his room bewailing his luck.

The next day he cashed the draft at Goldsinger's bank and opened an account. Then he devoted himself to soliciting fire insurance business.

After a few days it seemed to Lapidowitz as if every house on the East Side had been insured from time immemorial and that all the insurance policies still had a thousand years to run. Nobody wanted to be insured. Every man he approached carried more insurance than he had any use for. The very bottom seemed to have dropped out of the insurance business. And gradually his forty-two dollar inheritance dwindled to thirty-two. Several times he had received a postal-card from Janowski asking him whether he had received his money from Russia, but he paid no heed to any of them. Then one day Rosen said to him:

"That fellow Janowski has bought a new

house. Maybe you can get him to insure. He don't like me, so it's no use if I go."

Lapidowitz took a long walk to think it over. Several times he took his check-book from his pocket and studied the figures on the stubs. Then, suddenly, a broad grin illuminating his face, he strode into Janowski's office.

There was an outer office where a red-haired, red-eyed, and red-nosed clerk sat leaning against a wooden partition.

"I would like to see Mr. Janowski," said Lapidowitz. The clerk winked and, with his thumb, indicated the door that led through the partition. In the compartment beyond, Lapidowitz found Janowski seated at a desk that stood against the partition.

"Hello, Lapidowitz," exclaimed Janowski cordially. "It is a great pleasure. What a warm day it is!"

Lapidowitz deposited his silk hat upon a bookcase and, seating himself beside the desk, plunged into business. "I have been so terribly busy," he said, "or I would have come long before. Because I like you very much, Mr. Janowski. I heard to-day that you have bought a new house. So I came to see if you wouldn't

like some fire insurance. You know it's terrible the way houses burn down if there's a fire."

"Sure," said Janowski, nodding, "but business before pleasure. Thirty dollars you owe me and two dollars, and Mr. Goldsinger says you have an account in the bank. So first comes a check. Then we talk fire insurance."

"A check?" repeated Lapidowitz.

"Sure. Didn't you give a promise? Ain't you a man of your word? Sure you are. A check for thirty-two dollars, and then we talk fire insurance. And we talk big fire insurance, too, because I have been thinking about it for two days."

Lapidowitz swallowed several lumps that clustered in his throat.

"The silverware—" he began.

Janowski waved his hand.

"Never mind about the silverware. You got forty-two dollars for it. Ain't it? I didn't think it would bring so much."

Lapidowitz gazed at him, speechless. Then, desperately, he drew out his check-book and wrote out a check for thirty dollars. "I was keeping it for a rainy day," he said, "but I am an honest man, and I promised to pay it. Only the two dollars I will owe you for a while."

"Sure," said Janowski, good-naturedly. "As long as you are a man of your word I know I will get my two dollars. Besides, I told you I was a very smart man."

He indorsed the check and, with great care, thrust it into one of the pigeonholes of his desk. Then, with a portentous cough, he turned to Lapidowitz.

"You see, Mr. Lapidowitz, I like you. Why, I don't know. If I believe what every one says about you—your best friends, too—you are no good at all. And, what's more, I believe it, too. You borrow from everybody and never pay, and you won't let anybody help you because you hate to work. Now I know a nice place where you can get a good job. A friend of mine has a clothing-house—"

"Mr. Janowski," said Lapidowitz haughtily, "I am a fire insurance agent. Let us talk business."

"Sure," said Janowski. "Now we talk fire insurance. But I only just want to say that when you make up your mind to do some real work and not be a schnorrer living on your friends, I will be glad to help you."

He looked at his watch. Then he grinned.

"Mr. Lapidowitz," he said, "I paid twenty-

five thousand dollars for the house I bought. There is a mortgage on it for twenty-one thousand dollars and a second mortgage for two thousand dollars, and, would you believe it, that house is insured for twenty-eight thousand dollars, and I'm paying nearly as much for the insurance as I'm getting out of rents, because only one family lives in the house."

For a second Lapidowitz tried to overcome the choking sensation that suddenly seized him. "Swindler!" he cried. "Give me back my check."

"Your check?" said Janowski in surprise. "My check, you mean. Oh, yes. I know what you want."

He drew from his pocket Lapidowitz's promise to pay back the thirty dollars and handed it to him. Lapidowitz tore it into shreds.

"Never mind, Mr. Janowski," he said. "I just go to the bank and tell them not to pay the check. So you see you ain't so smart, after all."

Janowski grinned.

"Come here," he said, "and look where I put your check."

Lapidowitz, amazed, leaned forward and gazed into the pigeonhole where he had seen

Janowski place the check. He could see daylight. In the back of the compartment was a hole that extended clear through the partition.

"Sometimes," said Janowski, even before Lapidowitz's mind had grasped the full significance of the situation, "come swindlers. So I put the check through the hole, and I guess by this time my clerk is at the bank to get the money."

Then, with an exclamation of rage, Lapidowitz, forgetting even his hat, rushed out of the place.

"Remember," Janowski called after him, "I like you."

But Lapidowitz did not hear. He ran all the way to the bank.

"A check?" the cashier said. "Wait a minute. Yes. Sure. Payable to Janowski. Thirty dollars. His clerk was just in to cash it."

"Then it's too late?" asked Lapidowitz.

"Too late? For what?"

But Lapidowitz did not answer. Muttering imprecations upon the bank, upon checks, and upon Janowski, he retraced his steps to the coal-dealer's office where he had left his hat. The red-haired, red-eyed, and red-nosed clerk

sat leaning against the wooden partition. When he beheld Lapidowitz he smiled.

"Mr. Janowski has just went out," he said with a grin.

"I come for my hat," said Lapidowitz.

"Oh, your hat. That was very funny about your hat."

The clerk paused and laughed, and Lapidowitz, a sense of impending calamity sending chills down his spine, stared at him.

"Right after you ran out comes an old-clothes man and asks Mr. Janowski if he has any old hats to sell. So Mr. Janowski looks around his office and sees a silk hat. And he sells it for a dollar. After the man has went Mr. Janowski says to me, 'I have made a terrible mistake,' he says. 'I sold Mr. Lapidowitz's hat, thinking it was mine!' So then he says, as long as it's his fault, he is willing to lose by it. So he gives me this paper to give you."

Whereupon the clerk handed Lapidowitz the I. O. U. for two dollars that he had given to Janowski.

Lapidowitz stared at him. Several times his lips moved as if he were about to speak. Once or twice his arm moved as if he were contemplating assault upon the red-haired clerk. Fi-

nally he sighed and walked slowly out of the place. When he reached his room he found a note from Janowski.

"The man I spoke about who has got a job for you," it ran, "is Harris, who keeps the clothing-store on Rivington Street, near Essex."

V

Lapidowitz Lapses

GORDONSKY, coming home unexpectedly one afternoon, caught Moishe, his fourteen-year-old offspring, smoking a cigarette. That night there was wailing and lamentation in the household of Gordonsky. Moishe's mother wept because her only child was on the highroad to perdition.

Gordonsky groaned in spirit to think that the idol of his heart had fallen into the ways of *Goyim,* because, in those days, cigarette-smoking had not taken such strong hold upon the chosen people of the East Side. Even Lapidowitz, the schnorrer, dropping in for a free evening meal, clucked many a reproachful "Ts! Ts!" at Moishe and shook his head quite sadly over the lad's depravity. Moishe alone wailed for purely material reasons.

The matter was discussed for several days from every conceivable standpoint. Gordonsky consulted the rabbi and the sweatshop boss

for whom he worked. And the upshot of it all was the decision, concurred in by all, that Moishe had completed his education and was fully equipped for work.

"School," said Gordonsky, "is not a place for cigarette-smokers."

Thus it happened that Moishe set forth one day to seek employment, and ere the day was done he had found it. Mandelbaum & Kaplan, Importers and Dealers in Wines, Liquors, and Spirits of All Kinds, covenanted with Moishe to accept his services as office-boy at the weekly wage of three dollars.

"They're funny people," said Moishe, after a few days. "Mr. Mandelbaum is a great, big man and never says a word, and Mr. Kaplan is a little bit of a man and talks all the time."

"What do you have to do?" asked Lapidowitz, who, as usual, had dropped in for supper.

"I sit in the office and paste labels on the bottles. They make all kinds of things—French brandy and wine and German wine and Cream de Mint—oh, everything they make over in the factory in Hoboken. And when anybody calls I got to go in and tell one of the bosses. Also I get the apples and pears for the bookkeeper, and sometimes I get a penny extra."

"And the bookkeeper," asked Lapidowitz, "how much does he get?"

"It ain't a he. It's a she," explained Moishe. "Miss Lazinsky her name is. She's terrible homely with a glass eye, but she gets twenty-five dollars a week."

"Twenty-five dollars?" repeated Lapidowitz incredulously. "A woman with a glass eye earns so much? It's a great country, ain't it, Gordonsky?"

Gordonsky smiled. "Maybe some day you might marry her and never have to work," he said maliciously.

The schnorrer shook his head. "With a glass eye—never! But if I could get a nice job in a wine and liquor business I think I would be a big success."

"A great success in drinking up the business, maybe," said Gordonsky dryly. "You and work will never live in the same town."

At the end of the week Moishe came home, elated. "Mr. Kaplan," he said to Lapidowitz, "says you should come by the office on Monday, and maybe he got a job for you."

"For me?" exclaimed the schnorrer.

Moishe nodded vigorously. "I heard Mr. Mandelbaum say for why in blazes somebody

didn't keep the stock-room in order, and Mr. Kaplan says every time he gets a man he drinks up all the bottles and don't do nothing, so he gave it up for a bad job, only it's a pity he couldn't find a good man because it's a chance for him to work his way up in the business, and I says to him, 'Mr. Kaplan,' I says, 'I know a man what would like a good job in the wine and liquor business,' and he says, 'What's his name?' and I says, 'Mr. Lapidowitz,' and he says, 'For heaven's sake send him around.' "

On the following Monday morning Mr. Mandelbaum and Mr. Kaplan were regaled with a view of Lapidowitz. Mr. Mandelbaum promptly retreated to an inner office. Mr. Kaplan remained to gaze wonderingly upon the tall, imposing figure, long bearded and dignified of mien, silk-hatted and frock-coated, that stood before him. Finally he scratched his head.

"We only intended to pay six dollars a week," he said, in English.

"Dot's enough for a commencer," said Lapidowitz, with a smirk.

And then, with great swiftness, Mr. Kaplan realised what he had to deal with. A schnorrer, you see, is, after all, a schnorrer, and the breed

is quickly recognised. Mr. Kaplan's manner instantly changed.

"All right," he said, in Yiddish. "Take that pot off your head, hang up your coat, and go into the stock-room. Clean all the dust off the bottles, and I'll be in later to tell you what to do."

And Lapidowitz, bowing amiably to this recognition of his status, entered upon his labours. Once he came into the outer office and gazed for a long time upon the face of a middle-aged woman who sat poring over a huge ledger.

"Is that the bookkeeper?" he whispered to Moishe. The lad nodded.

Lapidowitz shuddered. "It pains me to look at her," he said.

The duties of Lapidowitz required the expenditure of but little intellectual effort. For three days he dusted shelves, rearranged bottles, and ran errands for Mr. Kaplan. Mr. Mandelbaum seemed unaware of his existence. Then it chanced that business called Mr. Mandelbaum to Schenectady. A customer in that town insisted upon greater variety in the colour of Crème de Menthe, promising quite a large order if Mandelbaum & Kaplan would produce a blue-, violet-, and an orange-hued species.

And he had hardly boarded his train when Mr. Kaplan was seized with an attack of mumps. The administration of the firm's business fell upon the shoulders of Moishe, Lapidowitz, and the bookkeeper with the glass eye.

Lapidowitz rose to the occasion. Instead of confining himself to the stock-room, he established himself at Mr. Kaplan's desk, and read the newspapers. He sent Moishe on errands, and the lad obeyed promptly. Ever and anon he would stare wonderingly at Miss Lazinsky, the bookkeeper, and then would shake his head. Once he spoke to her. He told her that it looked like rain. Miss Lazinsky looked up from her book and surveyed Lapidowitz calmly from head to foot. And then she smiled and resumed her reading. Lapidowitz whistled to keep up his spirits, and asked Moishe to run out for an evening newspaper.

Strange as it may seem, Lapidowitz's weather forecast came true. It rained. It rained all that night and all the next day—a steady, depressing, and dreary downpour that seemed to rob life of all its joy and fill the soul with gloomy foreboding.

Lapidowitz was wet to the skin when he came to the store that next morning. The endless

rows of bottles in the stock-room with their multi-coloured contents stretched before him with a new significance. In justice to Lapidowitz this must be made clear: he was not a drinking man, and liquor held no temptation for him. But he was cold and wet, and it almost seemed as if the bottles held out arms promising warmth. He selected one in which the cork sat loosely, and drank from it a draft that set his blood aglow and all his nerves tingling. Then, stroking his beard, he sauntered into the outer office and leaned nonchalantly against Miss Lazinsky's desk.

"I told you it would rain," he said. Miss Lazinsky did not even look up. But, unabashed, Lapidowitz fell into a cheerful monologue in the course of which it occurred to him that a glass eye was not a whit unbecoming to beauty and that twenty-five dollars a week covered a multitude of shortcomings. The sky grew brighter and brighter, and Lapidowitz, murmuring an apology, returned to the stock-room and opened a bottle that was completely enveloped in gold foil. He brought it to the bookkeeper's desk and urged her to drink.

"Please go away," she said. "I am busy, and you are bothering me."

Lapidowitz returned to the stock-room and gazed upon the bottles. He was happy. The vigour and brilliancy of his own thoughts impressed him profoundly. The problems of life that had long been puzzling him seemed suddenly to be amazingly simple. What fools Mandelbaum & Kaplan were to sell their wares!

> I often wonder what the Vintners buy
> One-half so precious as the stuff they sell!

Heigh-ho! It was a great world! And people were foolish to worry. Lapidowitz strolled into the outer office again and began to hum a tune. Then, suddenly, it occurred to him that the Great Moment of his destiny had arrived. It was a wonderful moment! It came with the force of an avalanche, and the world quickly grew blacker and blacker. Lapidowitz began to realise that he was suffering pain, and the pain grew more and more excruciating with amazing rapidity. And slowly, oh, so slowly! the conviction dawned upon him that Mr. Mandelbaum was clutching him tightly by the collar and pulling him out of the store. When he reached the sidewalk the Great Moment of his destiny was past. He snapped his fingers at

Mr. Mandelbaum, laughed in his face, and went home.

It was an aching Lapidowitz that waked the next morning. It was a puzzled Lapidowitz that scratched his head and racked his memory to recall the details of the preceding evening. And it was a worried Lapidowitz that began to lose confidence in his memory and to wonder what had really happened the day before. Still, he thought, Moishe would know. He remembered distinctly that Moishe had been present, and by clever questioning he could draw from the lad an accurate account of what had taken place. He went to the house where Moishe lived and sent a boy up-stairs for him.

"He has went to school," the boy reported.

"To school?" repeated Lapidowitz, puzzled. "How can that be? He goes to work."

"His mother says he has went to school, but maybe he's playing hookey," explained the lad.

Lapidowitz went to the nearest school and asked for Moishe. And, sure enough, Moishe himself appeared, a broad grin upon his face.

"Why ain't you in the store?" asked Lapidowitz.

"Mr. Mandelbaum gives me my wages to let

me go to school for another year," explained Moishe. "He says business ain't no place for me because I'm only a—what-do-you-call-um? —a child."

"He pays your wages and lets you go to school?" asked Lapidowitz incredulously. "When did he do it?"

Moishe looked at him in surprise. "When he came in the store. Don't you remember? You was trying to kiss the bookkeeper, and the boss just looked at you, and then he asked me how old I was. Then he says it's too bad. Didn't you hear him?"

Lapidowitz wiped the perspiration from his forehead. "I was—er—kissing the bookkeeper?" he asked, bewildered.

Moishe giggled. "Don't you remember? You said you'd do it just for spite because she wouldn't marry you. And you told the boss to mind his own business."

"Oh, yes," said Lapidowitz feebly. "Ha! Ha! Ha! Yes, I remember. Funny, wasn't it?"

"It was awfully funny!" exclaimed Moishe, laughing. "You didn't know he was so strong, did you?"

"So strong? Who?" asked Lapidowitz.

"Mr. Mandelbaum. He just grabbed you by the collar like a baby and threw you out of the store."

"Oh, yes. Ha! Ha! We were only fooling, Moishe. You're too young to understand. I —er—just dropped in to see how you're getting along and—er—the bookkeeper—er—she didn't say anything, did she?"

"Oh, no. She only asked me if it was true about the tenement-houses you own, and I said no, it's only a joke because you want to get married with her, and she says you're all right."

A cold shiver crept up and down Lapidowitz's spine, and the perspiration fairly rolled from his forehead. "Moishe," he whispered hoarsely, "I just come in to ask you to do me a favour. Go to the store this afternoon and tell her I'm going to Chicago and won't be back for a couple of years. When you are older you will understand. Only do it. Won't you?"

Moishe's eyes opened wide. "You're going to Chicago?" he asked.

Lapidowitz gazed at him long and intently. Then he winked. "Between man and man, Moishe, I ask you to tell her."

And Moishe laughed and promised. Lapidowitz went to Milken's café, and all day long sat

thinking. In the evening, chastened in spirit and glowing with good resolve, he went to the synagogue.

VI

Love Me Love My Dog

LIFE itself is very inconsequential. A man who has been living in a cave for two months may step out just in time to be run over by an automobile, and no philosopher could ever figure out satisfactorily the proper relation between the two incidents. What we call a coincidence is only a correlation of facts that we happen to notice. But, whether we notice them or not, facts seem to keep on correlating. After which burst of wisdom let us plunge into the story.

Izzy Levine sat at his desk in Marcus & Gomprecht's establishment putting the finishing touches to an essay on "Should Women Vote?" Not that Marcus & Gomprecht dealt in woman's suffrage. They were in the wholesale upholstery business. But the *Yiddish Arbeiter,* a popular Ghetto weekly, had offered a series of prizes for the best argument either for or against woman suffrage, and Izzy, ambitious to

shine in the field of literature, overflowing with Schopenhauer's ideas on the unfitness of women for everything, and not a bit interested in the upholstery business, had been devoting a great deal of his time to this essay. Gomprecht, the junior partner, was rather a phlegmatic person, and when Mr. Marcus called his attention to the amount of time Izzy devoted to everything save the upholstery business would only shrug his shoulders.

"But can we afford to pay wages by a loafer?" Mr. Marcus would insist.

"Ven you vas young like him," Gomprecht would answer, "you didn't never kill yourself working."

This particular afternoon the spectacle of Izzy sprawling over Marcus & Gomprecht's writing-desk, writing on Marcus & Gomprecht's stationery, in Marcus & Gomprecht's time exasperated Mr. Marcus.

"Go down to der stock-room in der basement," he finally said to Izzy. "See if dere iss fifty-nine bales of horsehair."

Izzy had just finished his essay. Whistling cheerfully, he stepped upon the freight-elevator and descended to the basement. There were just fifty-nine bales. As the elevator rose to the

ground floor, a young man, gorgeously arrayed, called to Izzy to stop.

"Take me up," he cried. "The passenger elevator ain't running."

"Sorry," said Izzy, "but it's against the rules. You have to walk. Nobody is allowed to ride on the freight-elevator." He pulled the cord, and the elevator began to ascend.

The young man shook his fist. "Come back here!" he cried. "Do you know who I am?"

Izzy smiled at him. "No," he said, "but if you walk up-stairs and give me your card maybe I'll be glad to make your acquaintance."

"You're a loafer!" cried the young man, exasperated.

Izzy, whistling softly, stopped the elevator and then began to descend. "What did you say?" he asked.

The young man had at least the courage of his convictions. "You're a loafer!" he repeated. What happened after that, happened so swiftly that it would be difficult to tell it in detail. Then Izzy stepped upon the elevator and pulled the cord.

"Never call names when you ain't introduced," he said, smiling amiably.

The young man picked himself up from the

corner into which he had shot and shook his fist. "You'll suffer for this!" he cried.

Izzy returned to his desk and began to address an envelope to the Should-Women-Vote? Editor of the *Yiddish Arbeiter*.

"Vell," exclaimed Mr. Marcus, bustling toward him, "v'y didn't you come unt tell me how many bales iss?"

"Because," said Izzy, moistening the flap of the envelope, "you didn't ask me to. You said I should go and see if there are fifty-nine bales."

Mr. Marcus glared at him. Somehow or other, Izzy had the effect of setting every nerve in Mr. Marcus's body on edge.

"How many bales iss?" he asked.

"Fifty-nine," said Izzy.

Then the door opened, and the gorgeously arrayed young man, breathing heavily from his stair-climbing, burst into the room. One of his eyes was very red. He approached the junior partner's desk.

"Look!" he said to the astonished Gomprecht, and pointing to his eye, "look what that prize-fighter you got did to me."

Gomprecht glared at Izzy. "Did you hit my son?"

Izzy surveyed the young man calmly. "I

didn't know he was your son, but he said I was a loafer, so I had to punch him."

"I guess," said Gomprecht dryly, "maybe he vasn't so wrong. You better pack up and get ouid!"

"Sure," said Izzy cheerfully; "anything to oblige. But you should educate your son not to call people names, or maybe his other eye will get into trouble."

Then Izzy affixed three of Marcus & Gomprecht's postage-stamps to his letter, donned his hat and coat, lit a cigarette, and with a cheerful air, departed. The cheerfulness of his demeanour, however, was entirely assumed, and by the time he reached the street, Izzy looked quite as dejected as he felt.

He lived alone with his mother and supported her, and while he felt he would have little difficulty in finding new employment, he realised that, distasteful as the upholstery business had been to him, it had paid better than anything he was likely to find for some time.

The next thing that happened was a dog-fight. Izzy had stopped to post his letter when two dogs in lively combat rolled against his legs. Izzy stepped aside to watch the fray. Isn't it wonderful that nearly all human beings have

achieved that pinnacle of civilisation that whenever they see two dogs fighting they pause to look on! Izzy's heart went out instinctively to the smaller dog. This was a yellowish-brown animal, evidently a cross breed of fox-terrier, bulldog, spaniel, Spitz, and dachshund. Yet, while his family tree was unquestionably bewildering, there was something delightfully appealing in his ears and his soft, brown eyes. And the fight was against him. Even as Izzy watched the combat the bigger dog, in one spring, seemed to overwhelm his little antagonist, and after one fierce whirl, trotted off, leaving the little fellow dazed and vanquished. There was no one else around, and the dog looked up into Izzy's face and, slowly, his stump of a tail began to wag. Izzy stooped and patted him upon the head.

"You made a good fight, doggie," he said, "but I guess you ain't much of a fighter."

The dog raised one paw, cocked his head on one side, and with each ear at a different angle gazed at Izzy. But Izzy had troubles of his own, and with a final, comforting pat upon the head, turned away and started homeward.

The next thing that happened was that the door of Milken's Café was open, and the in-

vigorating odour of coffee assailed Izzy's nostrils. He hadn't thought of coffee before that moment, but now it seemed to him preposterous to plan what he would do in the future without first drinking a cup of it. So he entered and was immediately hailed with a cry of joy from a tall, lank, bearded, and seedy-looking individual, who sat at one of the tables, jotting down figures in a note-book.

"Izzy Levine! Of all men! I was just hoping you would come in."

"That's funny," said Izzy, smiling. "I've never been in here before. But, my dear Lapidowitz, I am no good to-day. I've just lost my job."

"But only two dollars, Izzy," exclaimed the schnorrer without wasting a word of sympathy. "You see, I need ten to go to Buffalo, where Gordonsky has a job for me, and if you give me two, that makes six in all, and I can easy get the other four."

Izzy laughed heartily. "Here's a dollar, Lappy. Not a cent more. Never mind about the Buffalo story. I gave you a dollar to go to Chicago last month. Have a cup of coffee and tell me the latest gossip."

Lapidowitz accepted the dollar with a bene-

diction that applied to Izzy and all his progeny through six generations. Then, looking down at the floor, "Where did you get the dog?" he asked.

"What dog?" asked Izzy, looking in his turn. And there, behind him, joyfully wagging his tail at being noticed, stood the victim of the recent combat.

"Well, you're a great doggie," said Izzy. "Whatever put it into your head to follow me?"

The dog rose upon his hind legs, laid his paws upon Izzy's knees, and began to lick his hands.

"I guess he has adopted me," said Izzy.

"Ugh!" exclaimed Lapidowitz. "I hate dogs."

But Izzy paid no attention to him. He drew the dog upon his lap and stroked his head and his soft ears. "I guess," said he, "if no one comes around and claims you I'll have to give you board and lodging. I never had a dog follow me before."

The dog wore a collar, but it apparently bore no mark that gave a clue to his ownership.

"Well, good-bye, Lapidowitz," said Izzy, rising. "That makes three dollars you owe me, but you needn't pay me until you have the money."

Whistling cheerfully, he strode out of the café. The dog followed him for a few paces, then stopped, hesitated an instant, bounded toward Lapidowitz, uttered a shrill yelp that made the schnorrer leap from his chair in terror, and then turned and dashed after Izzy. Lapidowitz sat for an hour pensively cursing dogs.

The following afternoon it happened that Lapidowitz sat in Milken's Café all alone. Milken, after pocketing all the money in the drawer, had stepped out to do some marketing and had asked the schnorrer to keep an eye on the place. It was an unlikely hour for customers, and Lapidowitz was beginning to doze in his chair when there entered an elderly man of such imposing appearance and of such fierce mien that Lapidowitz promptly rose to his feet.

"Did you see my dog?" he asked, in excellent Yiddish.

"Your dog?" repeated the schnorrer.

"No. My cow!" cried the other fiercely. "Didn't you hear me say dog? I lost him somewhere in the neighbourhood, and I'll pay a hundred dollars to any one who finds him."

Lapidowitz grasped the back of a chair for support. "A hundred dollars?" he gasped.

The man looked at him in amazement. "Say, you must have lots of time and nothing to do if you always repeat everything people say. A dog, I said, and a hundred dollars. That's what I said. I'm leaving word everywhere in the neighbourhood."

Then Lapidowitz awoke and rose to the occasion. "Don't leave any more word," he said quickly. "I guess I can find him for you. A yellow, brown dog, with spots and—and a little tail—and—"

"Yes, four feet and a nose. Where is he?"

"I—I think a friend of mine has him. But he isn't home now. Give me your address, and I'll bring the dog to you to-morrow."

The man handed him a card bearing the name of Isaac Margulies and an address uptown that unfolded visions of fabulous wealth to Lapidowitz's mind.

"Mr. Margulies!" he fairly gasped.

Pleased with the effect of his name, the rich man's manner grew more affable. "You see," he explained, "it was the anniversary of my wife's death, and I went to the cemetery on Long Island in my forty-horse-power automobile. I had the dog in the what-do-you-callum, the tonneau in the back—he's my daughter's

dog. And on the way back I stopped on Clinton Street, near where I used to live, to get some pot-cheese with onions which you can't get anywhere else. The first thing I noticed when I got back into the automobile, the dog was gone. Good riddance, I says. But when I get home, you ought to heard my Rosie cry and make a fuss! Well, I got to go. You fetch the dog up and get a hundred—well, let's say a hundred and fifty. Good-bye!"

And he was gone, leaving Lapidowitz in a state of momentary though joyful collapse. One hundred and fifty dollars! And so easy! It was like raining money from the sky. And in addition, to do a favour for Isaac Margulies, who not only owned a dozen tenement-houses, but lived uptown like a stylisher! Without giving a moment's thought to Milken or the deserted café, Lapidowitz hastened to Izzy's home.

His knock upon the door was answered by a series of vicious yelps.

"Come in!" cried a woman's voice.

Lapidowitz carefully opened the door about two inches. "Is Izzy in?" he asked.

"No. He's working temporary by Lubarsky's real-estate office. I'm his mother."

Lapidowitz hesitated a moment, then, "Would you like to sell that dog?" he asked.

"Sell Izzy's dog? Are you crazy? Who are you? Come inside."

"I'll give five dollars," said Lapidowitz.

"Not for a million dollars," said Izzy's mother emphatically. "Wait. I'll come to the door."

But Lapidowitz waited not. The prospect of the dog taking advantage of an open door gave wings to his heels. He took the steps four at a time. In breathless haste he betook himself to Lubarsky's office and seeing Izzy through the window, came to a halt. It would not do to approach him impetuously, thought Lapidowitz. It would be sure to arouse suspicion in his mind. So Lapidowitz walked slowly around the block to regain his breath, and then, in the most casual manner, sauntered in Lubarsky's office.

"Is Mister Lubarsky in?" he asked. "Well, hello, Izzy! Since when are you here?"

"Hello, Lappy! Lubarsky is out of town. I'm only minding the office for him until he gets back. Sit down and tell me all the scandal you know."

"How is the dog?" asked Lapidowitz, lighting a cigarette that Izzy proffered him.

"That dog," said Izzy, "is a wonder. He's just as smart as—as you are, Lappy. Honest he is! All day long he sits around and never does any work. In the afternoon he goes out for a little walk, but in an hour he always comes back and scratches on the door. And when I come home, he jumps all over me. He and I are just crazy about each other."

"Dogs are good company," vouchsafed Lapidowitz.

"Oh, I don't know so much about the company part," said Izzy. "Last night I just finished a fine poem for the *Yiddish Arbeiter* and the minute my back turned Gompy chewed up the poem."

"Gompy?"

"Yes, I've called him Gompy. After Gomprecht, a man I used to work for."

"Well, Izzy," said Lapidowitz slowly and thoughtfully, "I had an idea yesterday. You know I'm a very lonesome man. I live all by myself, and sometimes I get terribly lonely. So I thought maybe it would be a good thing if I got a dog, too."

"Fine!" exclaimed Izzy. "Every man ought to have a dog."

"So if you want to get rid of that dog you got I guess maybe I might take him."

"Get rid of Gompy? Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed Izzy. "You're crazy."

"Oh, of course," hastily added Lapidowitz, "I wouldn't expect you to do it for nothing. Suppose I buy him from you for—well, say five dollars."

Izzy grinned. "Have you got five dollars to spend for a dog?"

"Sure I have," said Lapidowitz eagerly. "Here is it!"

Izzy held out his hand and took the bill that Lapidowitz extended to him. "Sure enough. It's five dollars," he murmured. Then he drew two dollars from his own pocket, handed them to Lapidowitz, and pocketed the latter's money. "You owe me three dollars, you know," he explained. "There's your change. A man who has money to buy a dog has money to pay his debts. I'll leave it to the rabbi if you like."

Lapidowitz glared at him. His lips moved. He was about to burst into a torrent of imprecation, when by great effort he managed to control himself and mustered a sickly grin to his countenance.

"You're a great joker, Izzy," he said. "But

business is business. I really want a dog. Give me your dog, and I'll give you five dollars more."

Izzy opened his eyes in surprise. "Why, Lapidowitz, I wouldn't sell that dog for a thousand dollars. He and I are friends. Don't you understand? Go and buy some other dog. You can get lots of them."

Then Lapidowitz opened the floodgates of his wrath. "Swindler and robber!" he cried. "He ain't your dog! Give me back my money. I'm going to the police to tell them you stole the dog. I'll find the man who owns the dog, and he'll send you to jail. Loafer that you are! Give me back my money."

Izzy rose to his feet and yawned. "Lapidowitz," he said genially, "you no longer interest me when you speak like that." Then he seized the schnorrer by the collar of his coat and gently but firmly pushed him out of the office. In the scuffle, Lapidowitz slightly scratched his hand against the door, and finding it bleeding, hastened to the nearest drug-store to purchase a piece of sticking-plaster. Lapidowitz was afraid of germs.

While he was waiting for his purchase, he asked the druggist, "Gives it a medicine vot I

can give a dog so he don't know nothing unt goes asleep?''

''Chloroform,'' suggested the druggist. ''A good whiff of chloroform will make him unconscious.''

''Dot's fine,'' exclaimed Lapidowitz. ''How much costs it?''

''Oh, ten cents' worth will be all you need for a dog.''

''Unt how do I do it? Der dog eats it?''

''Oh, no! You pour some on a sponge, hold the dog tight, and press the sponge against his nose.''

''Hold der dog tight?'' asked Lapidowitz. ''Do I haf to do it?''

''Certainly,'' said the druggist. ''They hate the smell of chloroform. Shall I put up some in a bottle for you?''

''Never mind,'' said Lapidowitz gloomily. ''If I could hold der dog I vouldn't need der chloroform.''

That night, when Izzy reached home, the dog, as usual, sprang to meet him, barking joyfully, jumping on his hind legs in a frantic endeavour to caress his new master. When his mother told him of the mysterious visitor who had offered to buy the dog, Izzy became puzzled.

He took the dog on his lap and began to examine him closely. Izzy knew Lapidowitz and knew how easy it was for Lapidowitz to part with five dollars for a dog. For the first time, the dog's collar attracted Izzy's close attention and he unbuckled it. On the inside, engraved upon a small plate, he read, "BEANS. Property of Miss Rosie Margulies." And written in ink on the leather stood the address.

Izzy's heart sank. "So you belong to somebody else," he said to the dog. "And I have to give you up."

The dog looked into his eyes and, with that strange sympathy that dumb animals sometimes display, began to whimper as if he knew that something unwelcome had happened.

"Why, your name isn't even Gompy," said Izzy sadly. "It's Beans. Well, Gompy—or Beans—I suppose I'll have to take you back to Miss—what's her name?" He looked at the plate again. "Miss Rosie Margulies. I don't see what she wants with a dog. Maybe she'll be willing to sell you. Golly, that's a good idea! Hey, Gompy? Or Beans?"

The dog began to prance about with delight at the merry note in Izzy's voice. And Izzy determined to call upon Miss Rosie Margulies

early the next morning and see if she would be willing to sell Gompy—or Beans—for any sum that lay within his power to pay.

Izzy's was not a nature to be long depressed. He possessed the happy faculty of ignoring obstacles and, having been fortunate in most of the experiences of his life, had fallen into the way of looking upon the world as an institution devised to contribute to his happiness. If I were to attempt an analysis of his nature, it would be most unsatisfactory. Considering how difficult it is to know oneself, how much more difficult must it be to understand another? And, still more, to describe that other's character satisfactorily to a third? Izzy was honest, generous, happy-go-lucky, with no particular ambition in life, totally without prejudice, thoroughly unconventional, and absolutely lacking in reverence for all creatures and things mundane.

"Mother," he said, "it says here on Gompy's collar that his name is Beans and he belongs to a lady uptown. I'm going up in the morning and see if I can buy him."

"That's foolish," said his mother, upon whom the dog had not made quite so deep an

impression. "You'd better be getting a new job."

"Oh, there's no hurry. I have plenty of money saved up in the bank. I couldn't work, anyway, if I didn't have Gompy—or Beans. I don't think the lady can be very smart, or she wouldn't have called Gompy Beans."

"Supposing she won't sell him?" suggested his mother.

Izzy's eyes twinkled. "Well," said he, "I suppose, then, I'll have to marry her so as to keep the dog in the family."

"Supposing she's an old lady with grey hair and wrinkles?" said his mother, laughing.

"I'll tell her she can't have the dog back unless she adopts me. Say, mother, do you know what I think? I'll bet that rascal Lapidowitz found out the dog belongs to some one and wanted to buy him so that he could get a reward. Isn't he foxy!"

"Maybe the lady will give you a reward for bringing him back," suggested Mrs. Levine.

"A reward for Gomp?" said Izzy indignantly. "Why, I'd just as lief sell a little baby if we had one around here. Much rather, I think. Hey, Gompy? Or Beans?"

The dog jumped on his lap and began to lick his face with great enthusiasm. The next morning Izzy went uptown to the address that was written inside the dog's collar. The place was a brown-stone house, very modest and even somewhat faded-looking, but, according to the standards of Delancey Street, a stylish and palatial edifice. In front of it stood a small automobile.

Izzy rang the bell. The door was opened by a young woman—hardly more than a girl—and at the sight of her Izzy experienced a most wonderful and most amazing sensation. For a moment he could hardly define it. He kept staring at her and she at him. Then, swiftly, the curious feeling came over him that he had been dreaming all his life and had only now, at this moment, awakened. His lips parted as if he were about to speak and then, realising that for the first time in his life he was embarrassed, he laughed merrily. The girl smiled—she could not have helped it to save her life.

"Excuse me," said Izzy suddenly. "I forgot to take off my hat."

At this the girl laughed outright. Izzy, standing bareheaded with the sunshine sparkling (oh, we baldheaded men!) upon his curling

black hair, could not take his eyes from her face.

"Do you know," he said, "you're the most beautiful girl I ever laid my eyes on?"

The girl coloured, regained her composure, and drew herself up with as much dignity as she could muster to her aid. "Did you ring the door-bell?" she asked.

"Sure I did," said Izzy, his eyes dancing, "and in a minute I'll tell you what I came for. But first I want to apologise for saying you're so pretty. I shouldn't have said it, should I?"

"Why, no," with great indignation. "I haven't any idea who you are."

"Oh, I'm Isadore Levine. But that doesn't make any difference. I—I—say, do you know, when the light falls on your hair it shines just like gold? Oh, please don't go in. I came to see you about some business—I—just wait a minute."

The young lady frowned. He was an extremely good-looking young man, and it was evident that he admired her very much, but his breezy directness startled her.

"What do you want?" she asked him in an icy tone.

Izzy turned from her and resolutely fanned

himself with his hat. Then: "I got your dog. Are you Rosie Margulies? Yes, I've got him. And I came all the way uptown to see if I couldn't buy him from you. We're great friends, Gompy and I—I mean Beans. But my! All you have to say is you want him back and I'd walk all the way uptown on my head to bring him to you."

"You've found Beans?" exclaimed the girl, clapping her hands with delight. "Where is he? How is he? Why didn't you bring him with you?"

"You don't think I'm too fresh, do you?" asked Izzy humbly.

"For finding Beans?" she asked, in surprise.

"No. For saying you were a peach."

What Rosie really intended to say will never be known. But she happened to look into the young man's eyes and saw there a revelation of such adoring admiration—and they were fine eyes, too—that, in a twinkling, all resentment died within her. Yet she said:

"Yes, I think you are rather fresh. But where is Beans? When will I get him?"

"He is down in Delancey Street, in the tenement-house where I live with my mother."

There was a note, half of defiance, half of regret, in Izzy's voice. But Rosie looked at him with renewed interest.

"Do you live in Delancey Street?" she asked eagerly. "We used to live in Delancey Street, too. It's much nicer than Hester Street, where we lived before that."

All this time Rosie had been standing in the doorway, holding the door with both hands. Now, she suddenly turned, the door opened wide, and a young man appeared at her side. He was very gorgeously dressed and one of his eyes was black and blue.

"Hello!" said Izzy cheerfully. "How's Mr. Gomprecht?"

The young man glared at Izzy and was about to speak when, thinking better of it, he turned to Rosie. "Some one's calling you on the telephone."

"Please see who it is, Nathan. Find out what they want. This gentleman has found Beans."

"Gentleman?" uttered Nathan, as he went inside.

Izzy approached Rosie eagerly—came very close to her—and whispered hurriedly, "Say, if

he's a friend of yours I'm awfully sorry that I did it."

"Did what?" asked Rosie, in surprise.

"I'm sorry I punched him in the eye," said Izzy.

Rosie's eyes opened wide. And they began to sparkle. She leaned forward and whispered, "He told me he nearly killed the man who hit him."

They were both laughing when Nathan came forward again. "It's a man named Lapidowitz," he said. "He lives at the corner of Hester and Clinton streets. He says he's got your dog and wants you to send down for it with the reward."

VII

Love's Young Dream

"MAN'S inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn!" The teacher in school who taught us the rudiments of composition used to say, "Always begin a chapter with a broad, striking statement containing some great, general truth!" Having done the best we could, let us proceed.

Izzy stared at Nathan, bewildered, and Rosie stared at Izzy.

"Well," said Nathan, "what's the matter?"

Izzy was speechless.

"There must be some mistake," said Rosie. "This gentleman just told me he had Beans; didn't you, Mr. Levine?"

Nathan tittered. "I guess, Rosie," he said, with a grin, "maybe I'd better run down-town and bring the dog back for you. I'll pay the reward, and your father can settle with me later."

Then Izzy, whose mind had been occupied with watching a fairy palace that he had built with

great rapidity crumble into vanishing fragments with equal swiftness, awoke. "You know I told the truth, don't you?" he asked.

Rosie was puzzled. "I'm sure of it," said she. "But who is this Lapidowitz?"

"He's a loafer, a schnorrer, a liar, and I guess, a thief."

"But he's got the dog," remarked Nathan, grinning. "Good-bye, Rosie. I'll be right back with Beans." He started down the steps.

"No, you don't," exclaimed Izzy, starting after him. "I'm the only person in the world who will bring that dog back." He paused for a moment and turned to Rosie. "I'll call you up on the telephone about noon, and I'll tell you just when I'll have the dog here. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," said Rosie slowly. For just a second Izzy stood there gazing at Rosie, and in that second their eyes met and—I am really not sure what happened, but some swift and stirring current of communication must have been established and must have been exceedingly busy. Else why did Rosie blush? And why did Izzy's heart beat so tumultuously? Old as the hills and new as the budding rose, uncalled, unsought, and unexpected, without

rhyme and without reason, comes that wondrous moment of destiny when, as in the Oriental parable, a thousand years are crowded within the space of a second. Yes, it was only a second that Izzy stood there, motionless, upon the steps. Then he turned just in time to see Nathan crank the automobile that had been standing in front of the house, step quickly to the wheel, and start slowly down the street.

"I'll bring the dog, Rosie," cried Nathan.

Izzy, red with chagrin, began to run. With fiendish malice Nathan steered the car close to the curb and ran it just fast enough to keep pace with Izzy.

"Running's good exercise for the nerves," he said. The street, however, was wet—it had been raining during the night—and the automobile suddenly swerved and skidded against the curb. It was Izzy's turn to grin.

"Get a chauffeur!" he cried.

Nathan, recovering control of the car, turned into the next street and, feeling the rough stones firmer under the car than the asphalt, increased his speed and was soon out of sight. Izzy, with a sinking heart, ran all the way to the nearest elevated station and, of course, just missed a train.

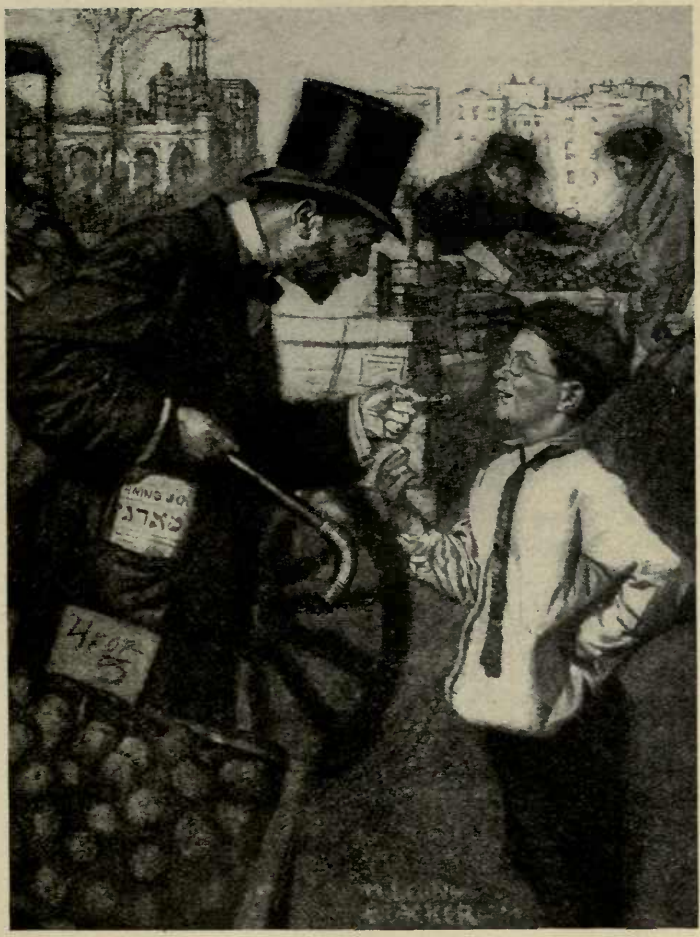
Luck was with Nathan. His knock upon Lapidowitz's door was answered by a vociferous "Come in!" mingled with the loud yelping of a dog in a disagreeable frame of mind. He opened the door, gazed in amazement at the spectacle before him, and the next moment burst into a roar of laughter. Upon a table in the centre of the room, squatted like a Turk and smoking a cigarette, sat Lapidowitz, while Beans, standing on his hind legs with his fore-paws against the edge of the table, was endeavouring vainly to reach him. Upon beholding Nathan the dog dropped on all fours and approached him, gave a few inquisitorial sniffs, and, recognising an acquaintance with whom he had no reason to quarrel, returned to the table and began to growl at Lapidowitz.

"Vell," said Lapidowitz, glaring at Nathan, "vot iss der joke?"

"Oh, dear," gasped Nathan, between bursts of laughter. "You look so comical sitting there with the dog trying to chew you up!"

"Maybe you like better I get down und let him bite me? Vot?"

"It's all right, anyway," said Nathan. "I'm here to take the dog back. You can get down. I won't let him bite you. He knows me."



"Here iss der key uf my room. Vait till der dog comes out. Take him to my room, und I gif you a quarter"

"Maybe yes und maybe no," said Lapidowitz. "But if it's der same to you, I stay here und ve talk business."

"How did you get the dog?"

A broad grin came up Lapidowitz's face. "I got a young friend vot t'inks he iss smart. Und he had der dog. Den, vun day, Mr. Margulies —say, did Mr. Margulies tell you about me?"

"No," said Nathan.

"Vell, my friend, Mr. Margulies, he comes to me und says, 'Lapidowitz,' he says, 'if you get my daughter's dog I gif you a hundred und fifty dollars!' So I goes to my friend und asks him to gif me der dog. 'Nefer,' he says. 'Sell him to me!' 'Nefer!' I ask his mother. 'Nefer,' she says. I ask der dog! My! He tried to bite my leg off. So vot could I do? My friend iss a desperate man. But dear Mr. Margulies vants his dog, und I need der hundred und fifty. Say, I tell you vot! I'm a smart man! Der dog likes efrybody except me, so vot do I do? I get little Sammy Lefkovitz, und I say to him: 'Sammy, I got a dog vot run away from me. He iss in dot house, but I ain't got time to vait for him. Here iss der key uf my room. Vait till der dog comes out. Take him to my room, und I gif you a quarter. In a liddle time Sammy

brings der key to me in Milken's café und says der dog iss in my room. Ain't dot smart? Den I telephone der lady, und here you are mit der hundred und fifty."

"A hundred dollars was all Mr. Margulies said he would give for a reward," said Nathan.

"Yes to efrybody else," said Lapidowitz eagerly, "but to me he says, 'Bring der dog, Lapidowitz, my friend, und I gif you one hundred und fifty dollars!' My vord uf honour!"

Nathan took a check-book from his pocket. "A hundred dollars," he said. But Lapidowitz would not have it. In his rosy optimism he had already planned to spend every cent of a hundred and fifty dollars, and any reduction of that sum came as a distinct loss to him.

"Well," said Nathan finally, "I'll give you a hundred and twenty-five. If you don't like it I'll go out and whistle, and the dog will follow me anyway."

Reluctantly Lapidowitz consented. Nathan wrote out the check, seized the dog unceremoniously by the collar, carried him down to the automobile, and tossed him into the tonneau.

"There," said he, "I guess that will hold that fresh loafer for a while."

He started up-town. As the car swung into

Eldridge Street Nathan experienced the joy of seeing Izzy running at full speed down Grand Street. He chuckled. It is rarely given to mortal beings to enjoy a keener sense of satisfaction than Nathan Gomprecht experienced at that moment. He slackened the speed of the car and, holding to the wheel with one hand, drew from his pocket and lighted a cigarette with the other. Then, settling himself against the cushion in luxurious ease, he opened the throttle wide and skimmed blithely up the Bowery. But, alas for the satisfaction of all mortal beings! It was written in the Book of Fate, eternities ago, how long the satisfaction of each mortal shall last, and from this decree there is no appeal. Beans, standing upon the rear seat with his forepaws high upon the cushion, began to bark. What he began to bark at will never be known. Nathan, worried lest the dog should take it into his head to jump out of the car, turned his head and stretched out his hand to seize Beans by the collar. It was a long stretch. And ere his hand could touch the dog, whether it was that the distortion of his body had turned the steering-wheel or whether the tires had struck another layer of the yielding mud that covered the street in patches, the car suddenly

skidded, flew sideways a few feet, and, with a rattle and a bang that made Nathan's heart sink, crashed into one of the pillars of the elevated railroad. Nathan was pitched out sideways and landed in a puddle, unhurt. Beans flew over the back of the tonneau as if he had been shot from a catapult, and, landing on his feet, stood for a moment gazing at Nathan and wagging his tail in great excitement. The next moment, with a few quick, shrill yelps, he flew off as fast as his little legs could carry him, and was soon out of sight.

Nathan arose and surveyed the wreck. A crowd had already collected, and a policeman, pushing his way forward, wanted to know Nathan's name and address. Nathan attempted to start the car, but failed. Some part within its vitals had given way.

"Guess you'll have to tow 'er home," suggested the policeman.

Nathan went to the nearest telephone and called up his bank. "I just gave a check to a man named Lapidowitz for a hundred and twenty-five dollars," he said. "I want to stop payment on it." Then he felt better and, having arranged to have his automobile towed to a garage, he took an elevated train up-town.

Meanwhile Izzy sat home alone and disconsolate. By the time he had reached Lapidowitz's dwelling the dog was gone. True, Izzy had seized Lapidowitz by the beard and had buffeted him soundly upon the ear and had said,

"You scoundrel, if you were not such an old man I'd break every bone in your lazy body!"

But all this failed to obviate the distressing fact that Gompy—or Beans—was gone. And Izzy went home to brood over his hard luck. His mother tried to console him, and Izzy told her the whole story.

"If you could only see her," he said. "So sweet! So beautiful! And if I could have brought her the dog I'm sure I would have had a chance. But that fellow will tell her some kind of a lie, and I'll never be able to make her believe me."

"Don't worry, Izzy," said his mother. "Remember what the rabbi says—there's always as good fish in the sea as ever was caught."

Izzy, despite his woe, could not refrain from smiling. "She ain't a fish, mother," he said. "She's a mermaid."

And just then, while both were laughing, there came a peremptory scratching upon the door, and the next moment Beans was jumping all

over Izzy, barking vociferously and his tail wagging violently.

"Good old Gompy-Beans!" exclaimed Izzy joyfully. "How did you ever get away? And you came right straight back to me! My, you're the finest little doggie in the whole world!"

For ten minutes Izzy and the dog occupied themselves with caressing each other. Then Izzy began to dress himself with more care than he had ever given to that function before.

"Mother," he said laughingly, "I'm going out, and if a young lady comes to see you, remember I'm the only son you've got, and tell her what a great man I am. See? And, whatever happens, don't let the dog out of the house."

A few minutes later Rosie Margulies received another telephone message announcing that her dog had been found.

"I'm coming right up-town on the elevated road," added Izzy. Ah! that ride up-town was a wonderful journey! Never before had the sky been so blue and all nature so attuned to cheerfulness! Never before had Izzy seen so many happy faces on an elevated train! Never before did a train run so smoothly—and so slowly. Even the houses along the route

seemed so bright that Izzy felt sure nothing but happiness could lurk within their walls. Youth and love! Wonder of wonders that these, the two greatest gifts of life, should belong to each other and partake each of the other's beauties! And, laughing together, how joyfully they view the world! All is sunshine and gladness—the shadows of existence have vanished away.

Within a block of her house Izzy met her, walking. For a moment a sense of disappointment swept over him, for he felt that, but by the merest chance, he would have missed her. But,

"I always go out for a walk about this time," she said hastily, "and papa's home."

"If I had missed the train I took," said Izzy reproachfully, "I wouldn't have met you."

"Young man," said Rosie, in a voice that would have been stern had not two dimples belied it, "I've been walking up and down this street for ages, waiting for you. I—I want to know about Beans. Where is he? How did you get him away from that horrid man?"

Izzy told her all that he knew of what had happened, walking beside her the while. Observing presently that they were near the park, he suggested that they sit down on a bench, as he had something very important to tell her.

"About Beans?" she asked quickly.

"No," said Izzy. "It's about another dog. His name is Izzy Levine. He's a poor dog, but he wants to tell you something."

There was something in Izzy's voice that belied his smiling eyes and brought the colour to Rosie's cheeks.

"Miss Margulies," he said, when they were seated, "everybody tells me I'm too fresh. And I guess they're right. But I want you to listen to me and not tell me that I'm too fresh until I'm through, and then, if you like, I'll get straight up and go away and never bother you any more."

"Where is Beans?" asked Rosie quickly. "Why didn't you bring him with you?"

"Miss Margulies," said Izzy quietly, "would you like me to go away without saying a word and bring Beans up here? I'll do it if you want me to?"

Rosie hesitated. The attraction of Izzy's personality was strong, but there was the equally strong—if not stronger—obligation of convention and of maidenly modesty. "Why, what do you want me to do?" she finally asked.

"I want you to listen to me," said Izzy.

Then he smiled. "I won't say anything to hurt your feelings," said he.

Rosie demurely crossed her feet, clasped her hands in her lap, and stared intently at the sky, her lips pressed firmly together. Izzy began to tell her of himself, of his parentage, his lazy boyhood life, and of all that he had done and hoped to do. His voice, low tuned and earnest, fell pleasantly upon the girl's ears. He told her of the many girls he had known, had danced with and taken to theatres—and how, one and all, they had failed to interest him. He dwelt upon his consciousness of his own ability and his own laziness.

"Ever since I was a boy I knew I could go out and work and make money as fast as the rest of them. But I never cared. As long as I could keep my mother and myself I preferred to loaf along and not bother about the future. If it should happen that I would want to wake up and get busy—why, well and good. I'd do it. But it was more fun to write poetry and articles for the newspapers and take life easy. And then, all of a sudden I woke up."

Rosie was no longer looking at the sky. Her eyes were fastened upon her hands. And then Izzy, slowly and haltingly at first, tried to tell

her of the impression she had made upon him when first he beheld her. And of how that impression had grown stronger and stronger. His voice rose, and the words came rolling fluently to his tongue. Youth, eagerness, and love combined to inspire him, and there poured forth a flood of golden oratory vibrant with truth and passion. Oh, that magic oratory of youth! Its words are fragrant as blossoming flowers: its tone sweet as symphonic music! Heedless of reason, of caution, of calculation, it gallops over all obstacles and leaps unerringly to its goal.

He told her of his love. Slowly his hand reached out and took both of hers in its grasp. Her lips were parted. She was gazing straight ahead, her eyes sparkling as if, in the foliage before her, she beheld a wonderful vision.

"I know I haven't known you a long time. I know it isn't right for me to talk like this. But I never saw such a beautiful girl as you. I never saw a human being that I loved as much as I love you. I haven't thought about anything in the world excepting you from the moment I saw you. There never was anybody in the world so lovely as you. And I know I am terribly fresh to expect that you will ever care

for me. I won't kill myself. I'm not saying foolish things. But darling—darling—darling—I'll never have a happy moment as long as I live away from you. I'll never care for anybody else on earth. I don't care what happens to me. My whole life belongs to you. To you, Rosie. Rosie!"

He repeated the name, slowly, softly, his head bending lower and lower toward hers.

"To you, Rosie—like Beans. A little dog and a big one."

With cheeks flushed and eyes brimming, Rosie looked at him, and in his smiling face read the truth—that great, wonderful Truth which only on rare occasions shines like a light upon the human countenance.

Then she withdrew her hands from his clasp. Her bosom heaved.

"I—I—you shouldn't talk to me like that," she said slowly. "I hardly know you. I—I like you—very much—I want to tell you the truth. But I know I shouldn't listen when you talk like that. Please!" she said hastily, seeing that he was about to interrupt her, "Please do not say any more. Maybe—later—oh! why did you talk to me like that!" And the next moment she was in tears.

Izzy, heartbroken, tried to console her. "Oh, please do not cry!" he exclaimed. "Forget all about me. I'm not worth a single tear. It's better I should be miserable for the rest of my life than that you should cry. I could kill myself for having been such a brute. Please forgive me. And forget everything that I said."

But soon her eyes were dried, and she turned to him with a smile. "I'm terribly foolish," she said. "But—I—I don't know what to say. I like you—really I like you—and—and—it's all so sudden to me. Please don't say anything more about it."

It seemed to Izzy that the sun never shone more resplendent through a summer cloud than did Rosie's smile through her tear-dimmed eyes. He began to talk of Beans, and in a very few minutes the conversation was running smoothly along safer channels. Once, like a reckless mariner, Izzy deliberately steered the craft of talk upon the rocks.

"There's one thing I forgot to tell you," he said, in a very determined voice. "I forgot that you were so rich. And I didn't even think of telling you that I don't care a what-do-you-call-um for all your father's money. When we

get married we'll start all by ourselves. You'll have everything in the world you want from me. Of course I suppose your father will make an awful fuss about your marrying me, but you're going to marry me as soon as you love me. And if you don't love me some day I'll die. No—please don't get up. I won't say another word. On my honour. I just felt I had to tell you that. But I'll talk only about Beans. I swear I won't say any more about myself. There—you can move over to the other end of the bench. But you ought to see the look in Gompy's—I mean Beansy's—face when I ask him where he's been all afternoon. He looks as if he were just dying to talk to me. Do you suppose dogs think just as we do? I'm sure Beans has more sense than a great many people that I know. Don't you?"

"I'm sure of it," said Rosie.

And then Izzy, being wise in his generation, began to talk of other things. It seemed that they had many acquaintances in common—people whom Rosie had not seen since her father had moved up-town—and in the interchange of gossip they were soon talking as if they had known each other for years.

There was something magnetic in Izzy's

story-telling, and Rosie, laughing merrily at his every anecdote, soon found herself pouring the secret aspirations of her soul into his ears. It was when Izzy, bubbling over with enthusiasm, described his ambition to become a journalist that Rosie confided to him one of the great secrets of her life.

"Papa doesn't know anything about it," said she, "and I'm sure he'd be awfully mad if he knew. But I'm secretary of the Woman's Suffrage League of the Daughters of Rebecca and —you believe in women voting, don't you?"

Izzy gazed into the beautiful eyes upturned to his so trustfully. "You bet!" said he.

"And I'm just dying," continued Rosie, "to make a speech that will make all the other girls envious. I can talk all right—I took lessons in elocution—but I don't know what to say. And if you can write for the papers you could easily write out something for me to say. Couldn't you?"

Izzy looked into her eyes that were so clear and blue. "I'll write you a speech," he said, "that will make all the other girls crazy with envy. I'll get you up the finest speech in favour of women voting that you ever heard. I'll—"

A policeman, sauntering along his beat, came into view, and Rosie, discovering to her great amazement that Izzy had taken possession of her hand again—hastily withdrew it and rose from the bench.

"I forgot all about Beans!" she exclaimed. "Where is he?"

Izzy hesitated for an instant. "I left him at home with my mother," he said in a low voice, "because I hoped you would go down and meet her. I know you'll like her. And you can bring Beans up-town with you. You'll come, won't you? I'll wait down-stairs, and you can go up and get him all by yourself. My mother is just dying to see you. I've been doing nothing but talk to her about you since I saw you."

Rosie frowned.

"Remember," said Izzy quickly, "what the Talmud says about young people going to see old people. We should always be very respectful to those who are older than we are."

And then Rosie burst into laughter. "You certainly are a fresh young man," she said. "The idea of your talking about the Talmud." For a moment she looked into his dancing eyes, hesitating. Then, "All right. I'll go with

you," she said. "But you must promise to behave yourself on the way and be sensible."

Izzy was ready to promise anything. Youth's readiness to promise is one of youth's most charming attributes. They journeyed down-town together, and when they reached the tenement in which Izzy lived he insisted upon remaining below while Rosie went up-stairs to claim the dog. The moment Rosie entered the house Izzy ran to the corner drug-store to telephone for a taxicab. And then he hastened to his bank to draw some money. He was determined that Rosie and the dog should ride uptown in style.

Rosie, meanwhile, was submitting to the enthusiastic caresses of Beans. The moment he beheld her he had begun to yelp with all his might and to leap upon her as high as he could until she took him upon her lap and allowed him to lick her face. It took but a few minutes for Rosie and Mrs. Levine to grow fond of each other. Rosie's interest in Izzy was already great enough to enable her to listen with pleasure to his mother's recital of his virtues. And when two women have a common interest they get on famously. Beans was soon forgotten. While Mrs. Levine was telling her

pretty visitor of Izzy's many good qualities Beans jumped from his mistress's lap and, finding the door open, slipped down the stairs.

"Only an hour ago," said Mrs. Levine proudly, "comes a young man from the *Yiddish Arbeiter* to ask Izzy to come to the office and see the boss. Because they had decided to give him the prize for his article about women who want to vote. And the young man said maybe Izzy could get a job on the *Yiddish Arbeiter* to write regularly."

"Did he write about woman's suffrage?" asked Rosie eagerly. "He didn't tell me about that."

"Oh, Izzy isn't a bragger," said Mrs. Levine, "but he wrote the finest article you ever read. Those foolish women who want to vote! What will they say when they read Izzy's article! They will feel so silly. I remember nearly every word of it—I read it so often 'Poor, foolish suffragettes!' That's the way it begins."

And then Mrs. Levine calmly recited the whole contents of Izzy's article, repeating many passages verbatim and gloating over the most vicious of his attacks upon the claims of the suffragettes, and so interested was she in the

recital that she did not notice the look of indignation that came to her hearer's face. When she had finished, Rosie, with lips tightly pressed together, arose.

"Where is my dog?" she asked.

Mrs. Levine, somewhat taken aback, glanced around the room and saw the open door. "I guess he ran down-stairs. He always does that. But he will be back in a little while. Won't you wait?"

"No, thank you," said Rosie frigidly. "I'll probably find him down-stairs. Good-bye."

And without another word she was gone, leaving Izzy's mother thoroughly perplexed. When Rosie reached the street she met Izzy returning from the bank and, at the same moment, a taxicab drew up in front of the house.

"Where is Beans?" she asked. "He ran down-stairs."

Izzy, instantly aware of some change in her, asked her quickly what had happened.

"Nothing has happened," she replied icily. "I want my dog."

"Please!" urged Izzy, standing humbly before her. "Please tell me what is the matter. Something has hurt your feelings. I know it."

"Oh, dear, no!" replied Rosie with a forced

laugh. "My feelings aren't hurt a bit. I really am not at all interested whether you are in favour of woman's suffrage or against it. I only want to find my dog and go home."

"Did my mother tell you—" began Izzy, but she interrupted.

"She did. And, if you don't mind, I do not care to hear any more about it. Where is Beans?"

Izzy, chagrined, bewildered, and, for the first time in his life, absolutely at a loss for speech, looked around the street and, in a feeble voice, began calling:

"Beans! Beans! Here, Beans!"

Rosie, despite her annoyance, had to smile. "You'll have to call louder than that. Ask those boys over there if they have seen anything of him."

Izzy approached a group of small boys who were playing marbles on the sidewalk. "Did any of you see a little dog running around here?" he asked.

"Sure," said one of the boys. "Mr. Lapidowitz's dog. Sammy Lefkovitz just seen him and grabbed him. He's gone off to take him back to Mr. Lapidowitz. Sammy always gets a quarter when he brings him back."

VIII

Just as It Happened

LIFE itself, you have been informed, often progresses in an incoherent fashion, without rhyme or reason, and the philosopher who undertakes to grasp the phenomena of coincidence or the natural sequence of cause and effect usually has nothing but a headache for his pains. A man endeavouring to avoid the danger of a brick falling from a building in course of construction takes to the middle of the street. We call this caution. Then, unexpectedly, the middle of the street caves in. What is the use of calling it anything?

Lapidowitz, with a check for one hundred and twenty-five dollars in his pocket, started for the bank the moment Nathan Gomprecht took the dog away. He knew the cashier of Nathan's bank, and he wanted to obtain money for the check as quickly as possible. Checks were good enough in their way, but they lacked the fascination for Lapidowitz that ready cash possessed. On the way to the bank he stopped

to order a suit of clothes. He was very particular in the selection of the material and gave the most detailed instructions as to how the suit was to be cut.

"I come back inside half an hour," said he, "und gif you some money on account."

Then he went to another store and ordered a new silk hat, and to still another, where he selected some brilliant scarfs. These he ordered sent "collect" to his room. Then he proceeded to the bank.

"Mr. Gomprecht stopped payment on this check," said the teller after glancing at the paper.

Lapidowitz's eyes blinked a great many times, and something seemed to be choking him. "Say it again!" he managed to gurgle.

"Only a minute ago," explained the teller, "Mr. Gomprecht calls up on the telephone and says we shouldn't pay this check. He says he gave it to you for a dog and the dog ran away from him. Maybe he don't know you well enough to trust you!" This last was accompanied with a grin. The teller knew Lapidowitz.

The schnorrer gazed at him blankly. "Does it mean I don't get the money?" he asked.

"It means," explained the teller, "you don't get the money out of this bank on this check just now. Maybe some other time, if you have another check, it will be different. But I'm busy now. Good-bye!"

And Lapidowitz, without another word, turned and left the bank. He went straight home and, without removing his hat, threw himself into a chair and began to curse Nathan Gomprecht. Like the cardinal in the Ingoldsby Legends,

> He cursed him at board, he cursed him in bed;
> From the soul of his foot to the crown of his head.

Then he proceeded to perform the same function for Izzy Levine as the original cause of all his unhappiness. After this he cursed Beans. The very thought of the dog seemed to stimulate his imagination, and many effective words that he had overlooked before came glibly to his tongue. For several hours he sat nursing his gloomy wrath, and, in his own peculiar fashion, he enjoyed it. There came a knock upon the door. "Come in!" said Lapidowitz, and a boy entered the room.

"I'm f'um der tailor. He says when do you

come vit' der money for der suit, because he don't go ahead vit'out!"

"Tell him I got a new tailor," answered Lapidowitz. And then, glad of a new channel for his thoughts, he proceeded to curse the tailor. Soon the hat and the scarfs arrived, and, after they had departed, Lapidowitz expended what was left of his vocabulary of imprecation upon the innocent storekeepers who had sent them. Again there came a knock upon the door, and, prepared this time to hurl the intruder down the stairs, Lapidowitz opened the door himself. With a loud yelp and a swift rush a dog darted through the doorway and closed his teeth upon the calf of Lapidowitz's leg. Lapidowitz shrieked, more in terror than in pain, and, loosening the dog's hold with one swift kick, sprang nimbly upon the table. Then Sammy Lefkovitz, his eyes open with amazement, entered the room.

"V'y does he bite you?" he asked. "Don't he like you?"

"Shut der door, qvick! Shut der door!" cried Lapidowitz. "So! You haf come back?"

He looked down from his vantage-point of

safety at the two gleaming rows of Beans's teeth, and then he grinned.

"Diss time, doggie, I guess ve keep company a liddle bit. No, Sammy, he don't alvays bite. Only sometimes v'en he gets egcited. But you are a good boy, und so soon vot I get change for five dollars, I gif you a qvarter! Now go in der closet over in der corner, Sammy, und get a piece of rop vot you find dere. So! Now tie him good und fast by der collar. So! Now be a good boy und sit down a minute. I haf got to t'ink."

After the lad had carried out his instructions, Lapidowitz sat squatted upon the table plunged in deep thought. Then a smile came to his face—a smile of sheer delight.

"My!" he exclaimed, jumping down from the table as far from the dog as possible. "I'm a smart man! Sammy, I'm der smartest man in New York. Now you come down-stairs und follow me. But hold fast to der rope, und don't let dot dog come near me. Promise it, Sammy!"

"Sure!" said Sammy. "He does everyt'ing what I tell him."

"I know it. But don't let go uf der rope!" urged Lapidowitz earnestly. They left the

house and started down the street, Lapidowitz walking swiftly ahead with many an anxious backward glance and Sammy behind him holding fast to the dog, who was straining with might and main to get at Lapidowitz. They came to a livery-stable, where Lapidowitz asked what it would cost to drive him and the dog to Margulies's house.

"Up there and back or only up?" inquired the stableman.

"For me und der dog up. I come down by der trolley-car. Vot? Five dollars? Such a liddle dog? I only vant a small carriage."

But it seemed that the only available equipage in the stable was one of those huge, old-fashioned coaches so familiar at swell East Side functions, and Lapidowitz had to pay the regular wedding or funeral rate. Furthermore, he was asked to pay in advance because, for some reason or other, his appearance aroused vague suspicions in the stableman's mind.

"Hey, there, Dennis!" cried the stableman. From a dark corner of the stable emerged a thick-set, broad-shouldered, square-jawed, red-faced, and cross-eyed specimen of humanity to whom, for some inscrutable reason, Lapidowitz

took a prompt dislike. The stableman pointed to Lapidowitz with his thumb.

"He wants to go up-town with the dog," he explained. "Take him up and leave him. He'll pay in advance."

Dennis filled his mouth with chewing-tobacco, inspected Lapidowitz in a somewhat contemptuous fashion, and mounted to his seat. There being nothing else to do, Lapidowitz paid the money, bade Sammy Lefkovitz put the dog into the coach and draw all the curtains, and, after making sure that the doors were securely closed, mounted beside the driver.

"How about dot qvarter?" asked Sammy.

"So soon v'en I come back you get it," said Lapidowitz.

"Why didn't you give the kid a quarter?" asked the driver, gazing curiously at Lapidowitz.

"V'y I didn't? Because dot five dollars I gif your boss iss der last cent vot I got. But so soon I get up-town, my! vot a lot of money I vill haf!"

In the meantime Izzy Levine and the Light of his Life were having troubles of their own. When Izzy, with bewildered countenance, reported to her that Beans was on his way back to

Lapidowitz, she gazed at him for an instant and then burst into laughter.

"What's the joke?" asked Izzy.

"Oh, I think it's too funny for anything!" cried Rosie. "Every time you think you have the dog he goes back to that man." And she went off into another peal of laughter. But, suddenly remembering that she was very angry with the young man, she became serious. "Anyway," said she, in the haughtiest tone that she could summon, "I can't stay here all day. I must go home."

Izzy, his lips pressed tightly together, led her to the taxicab. As she got in she told him her address. To her surprise Izzy gave the driver an entirely different address and got in beside her.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"To Mr. Lapidowitz's house," said Izzy. "We ought to get there before the boy who has Beans. We'll wait outside his house until the boy comes."

Rosie said nothing, but stared straight before her. Izzy looked at her for some time and then, in a low voice,

"Dear lady," he said, "I don't know what to say. I didn't mean to lie to you. I don't care

whether women vote or not—really I don't! It's true I wrote that article and—it's true I felt that way about it when I wrote it. But I hadn't met you, and—and I was just crazy to write something. And then when I met you—and everything changed—and you told me how I could do something for you—honestly, I would have written a speech to show that burglary was a fine trade if you wanted me to. You believe me, don't you?"

But Rosie gazed straight ahead in silence. She refused to allow her wrath to be so easily appeased. He had seemed such a nice young man, and he had so cruelly deceived her. She would show him that she was not to be trifled with. Slowly Izzy reached out his hand and laid it gently upon hers. She allowed it to rest there about two seconds; then she drew hers away. Izzy sighed and looked out the window. And as he looked—

Life as we all know, is most unreasonable in its inconsistency. Not only do our best laid plans often "gang agley," but those who have made the closest study of life's rules are the most bewildered by the exceptions. When a man devotes his life to frugality, works hard, day and night, in order to accumulate in the

bank a sufficient sum to enable him to pass his declining years in rest and comfort, he is considered wise. But, supposing, just as he bids farewell to his occupation and retires to idleness, the bank fails! What's the use of philosophising about it?

Izzy rapped furiously upon the window of the taxicab. The driver brought the cab to a halt and looked around. But Izzy, with an imperative "Wait!" had already opened the door, jumped out, and was running back. The driver drew the car along the curb and got down from his seat to see what had happened. The next moment,

"Well, I'll be—say, that's a shame!" he exclaimed.

Rosie alighted and looked around. "Where did he go?" she asked. And then, "Oh, isn't that terrible!"

About a hundred feet away the feeblest horse that she had ever seen was struggling desperately to pull a heavily laden pedlar's wagon that had become stuck in a rut in the street. It was a load out of all proportion to the animal's strength. And the driver, a tall, burly chap, was lashing the horse with might and main. Rosie's cheeks blanched with indignation.

"That young man of yours is a peach!" exclaimed the taxicab-driver. Then, for the first time, Rosie saw Izzy. He was climbing upon the wheel of the wagon. He laid his hand upon the driver's arm and spoke to him. Rosie could not hear what he said, nor could she hear the driver's reply. But she saw him lash the horse again, and then beheld Izzy strike him upon the chin, so swiftly and with such force that the driver toppled from his seat and fell to the ground.

"Good!" cried Rosie, clapping her hands. But in a twinkling the driver was on his feet and rushing at Izzy. They came to a clinch, and then a crowd that seemed to have sprung from the very sidewalk hid them from Rosie's view. She ran forward and was aware that a policeman was running beside her. The crowd made way for them, and Rosie saw that the combat was over. Izzy, breathing heavily, was leaning against the wagon, a tiny stream of blood trickling from his nose. The driver lay full length upon the sidewalk groping about him, struggling to rise. The policeman listened to every one's story and then,

"You're both pinched!" he said. "Come along!"

"But he was only trying to save the horse," cried Rosie. "That brute was beating that poor, little horse!"

"I can't help it, lady," said the policeman. "You can come along as a witness. But I've got to take them both in."

"It's an outrage!" exclaimed Rosie.

"It's assault and battery," said the policeman. "The driver says your husband punched him, and that puts it up to the captain."

Rosie blushed furiously, whereat Izzy turned his head to hide a smile. Policeman, prisoners, taxicab-driver, and spectators all helped to push the pedlar's wagon out of the rut, and then, the pedlar, leading his horse and the policeman walking amiably alongside Izzy, the procession started for the station house.

"Lady," said the taxicab-driver, "you'd better let me drive you around to the station. We can tell what happened, and if your young man needs bail you can go and get it."

Her husband! Her young man! Why should every one assume so quickly that they were anything but mere acquaintances? Rosie was indignant. But then came the quick recollection of Izzy's courage, his sympathy for a poor, dumb beast, and his strength. Rosie's

indignation died away, and a glow of pride succeeded it. She would stand by him to the bitter end.

It happened that the police captain on duty at the station house was intelligent. This really happens sometimes. After listening to both sides he asked the driver why he had beaten the horse.

"I'm sorry I did it," answered the driver, in Yiddish, "but I've been out of work for a week, and I got excited because I had a job to deliver a load. I won't do it again."

"I'm sorry I punched him," said Izzy. Then the captain made them shake hands and told them to go home. Izzy returned to the taxicab with Rosie. "I'm awfully sorry it happened," he said earnestly. "I was hoping you would go home. I'll never forgive myself for letting you go to a station house."

But Rosie suddenly turned pale and was fumbling in a bag that she carried. "You're hurt!" she gasped. "Your nose is bleeding."

Izzy saw the tears in her eyes. He sat perfectly still while she applied a delicately perfumed handkerchief to his nose. And then, feeling the soft coolness of her hand against his

lips and being a thoroughly disreputable scamp, he leaned back against the cushioned seat and said,

"It hurts terribly!"

Of course as long as it hurt she had to hold the handkerchief in place. And if Izzy's lips kept moving against her hand she could hardly chide him—he had suffered so. He might even die.

"Do you forgive me about that—that foolish article I wrote?" he asked, in the low voice of an invalid. Rosie nodded. She could hardly trust herself to speak. Then Izzy sat up, clasped her in his arms, and kissed her upon the lips.

"The pain has gone," he said. "Now we'll get your dog. And we'll never quarrel again. And as long as I live I'll never do or say anything that you won't like."

Rosie, red as the flower whose name she bore, looked at him. What was the use of getting angry? He was handsome, he was undeniably in love with her, and she had just had a glimpse of his nature that appealed strongly to her. What woman has ever yet failed to respond to the appeal of courage accompanied by strength? Is

there not that streak of the primitive in all of them? But though Rosie's eyes shone brightly she shook her head and smiled.

"You certainly are fresh," she said.

While Izzy had thus been gaining ground he had been losing time, and when they reached Lapidowitz's house the schnorrer and the dog were gone. Izzy was crestfallen.

"This time," said he, as they rode uptown, "I guess he'll hold on to Beans until he gets the reward."

But Rosie took it lightly. "What difference does it make? He can't get the reward unless he brings the dog back, and as long as I get Beans it doesn't matter how I get him."

Izzy shook his head. "It isn't right," he said. "I can't help feeling that you shouldn't get the dog back from anybody but me. Beans brought me all my luck, and it will be bad luck for me if any one else brings him back. Some day I'll get square with Lapidowitz for this."

"You're superstitious," said Rosie laughingly. "It just serves you right for writing an article against woman suffrage."

Izzy smiled sheepishly, but even when Rosie impulsively laid her hand upon his he refused to be consoled. "I can't explain it," he said, "but

I have a feeling that if I bring Beans back to you everything will be all right and if I don't everything will be all wrong."

As they turned into the block on which Rosie lived she exclaimed: "There's papa. Let's get out and walk home with him."

Izzy discharged the taxicab, and a moment later underwent the ordeal of an introduction to Rosie's father.

"This is Mr. Levine, papa," she said. "He's the gentleman who found Beans."

Mr. Margulies had keen eyes, and Izzy felt himself slowly shrinking under their penetrating gaze.

"Do you alvays ride in taxicabs?" was Mr. Margulies's first question. Rosie explained what had happened, laying great stress upon Izzy's noble championship of the skinny horse and his brave assault of the brutal driver, when she suddenly discovered that she was holding fast to Izzy's hand and, blushing violently, became quite incoherent in her narrative. Mr. Margulies gazed at Izzy with great interest.

In the struggle for existence in which he had won, he had learned to measure men. He was a very stubborn person, this Mr. Margulies, accepting no standards of life or conduct except

such as he fixed himself, and he was far from being a fool. He had suspected in a flash how matters stood between his daughter and this young man, and he had the wisdom not to open his mouth until he had made up his mind just what stand he would take. But Izzy, feeling himself being measured, did some quick measuring himself. Returning the older man's gaze frankly, he said:

"You look like a smart man, Mr. Margulies. There's no use beating about the bush. I'm just crazy about your daughter. I might just as well say it now as at any other time. I want to marry her. I don't want her to have a penny from you. I can take care of her."

Mr. Margulies looked at his daughter, who, red with confusion, returned his gaze defiantly, but said never a word. Then he grunted.

"H'm!" said he. "Mr. Levine! Der gentleman vot got Beans! H'm! Vare iss Beans?"

It was Izzy's turn to redden. "You see," he said to Rosie, "your father gets right down to the whole point of the matter." He then told the whole story of Beans and Lapidowitz, and during the recital Mr. Margulies never took his eyes from Izzy's face.

"H'm!" he said, when Izzy had finished. "I guess dot's dot old loafer vot I gif my card to when I looked for der dog. Und I said I gif him a hundert und fifty if he brings him back. So I suppose ven he comes mit der dog I haf to gif him der money." He looked at Izzy thoughtfully a moment. Then, "Und in addition you exbect to marry Rosie?" said he. Izzy nodded.

"Vell," said Mr. Margulies, "vait till comes der dog. Dis marriage business comes kind of sudden. Come in der house, Rosie, und ven ve get der dog settled ve talk about Mister Vot's-his-name—oh, yes!—Levine. Good afternoon, Mr. Levine."

Izzy remained standing upon the sidewalk until the door closed upon Mr. Margulies and his daughter. Not once did she turn to look at him. With a heavy heart Izzy started for the elevated station.

Some fifteen minutes before this Lapidowitz had rung the bell of Mr. Margulies's house, and being told that none of the family was at home had said he would return in half an hour. Then he said to Dennis, the driver of the carriage:

"Ve got to vait. Mr. Margulies ain'd home, but he comes soon for supper."

"Take the dorg out!" said Dennis curtly.

Lapidowitz stared at him. "Der dog?" he repeated. "Take him ouid? I guess not!"

"Then ye've got another guess comin'," said Dennis. "It wuz five dollars up for you and the dorg. Ye're up. So's the dorg. There wuzn't nothin' said about waitin'. Waitin's extra. Them's me orders!"

Slowly the full significance of his position dawned upon Lapidowitz, and his face began to perspire. He looked around in every direction and then mounted to the seat beside the driver.

"Drive around der corner," he said. "I vant to have a talk vit' you!"

"I'll drive to a saloon," said Dennis. "I'm dying for a drink. Me throat's full o' sawdust."

They drove to a little German place on Third Avenue which Dennis had noticed on the way uptown. Lapidowitz, after descending from his seat, held his ear to the carriage door, but heard no sound. He turned the handle and opened the door about half an inch. A reassuring "Gr-r-r-r!" came from within.

"He iss in!" said Lapidowitz, greatly relieved. When they were seated inside the place,

Lapidowitz placed his hand on his heart and bent a soulful gaze upon Dennis.

"In half an hour," said he, "I haf vun hundert und fifty dollars. Maybe I get a check und maybe I get cash. Vot's der difference? But you stick by me und wait vit' der dog until der man comes home, und nefer, so long as you lif, vill you be sorry."

"Orders," said Dennis, "is orders. Ye paid for a ride up. Ye're up. Ye didn't pay for a ride back, and ye didn't pay for waitin'. So me orders is to go back."

"But if I make it all right vit' you!" cried Lapidowitz eagerly. "Vot's der use of being in a hurry? Listen! Vait till comes der man, und I gif you two dollars out uf der money!"

Dennis rose. "Come on," he said. "Take yer dorg. I'll be getting back to the stable."

Lapidowitz clutched him by the lapel and for a moment gazed at him, speechless. Inwardly he was cursing this stubborn driver through three of his past generations and through half a dozen in the future. "Vait!" he begged. "How much do you vant?"

"Well, sir," said Dennis, "I don't trust ye for a cent. But give me yer I. O. U. fer twenty-five dollars, an' I'll take me chances. I'll wait

till yer man comes. I'll wait right outside the door, an' when ye come out I'll collect me money or I'll take it out o' yer hide. An' if ye don't like it I'll open the door o' the carriage an' kick yer dorg out. I've got to be gettin' back."

Lapidowitz pleaded with him, begged him to moderate his terms, explained how his grandfather and grandmother in Russia were starving for the lack of exactly one hundred and fifty dollars. But to no avail. Dennis had taken a strong fancy to the sum of twenty-five dollars. When Lapidowitz continued to plead with him he interrupted him.

"Ye make me tired," he said. "Shet up now or I'll make it fifty."

Lapidowitz, in a panic, wrote out an I. O. U. for twenty-five dollars. They drove to Mr. Margulies's house again.

Life, as we remarked before, is full of strange happenings that dovetail in with one another in such a bewildering fashion that it is almost hopeless to speculate upon them. Call them coincidences, accidents, manifestations of predestination—or anything you like—and you're no better off than if you called them veal-cutlets. A man telephones to his wife that he will be detained at his office by important business until

late at night. And with the utmost care and caution he organises an automobile joy ride with his partner and a few shining lights of the drama. But if, far out on the highway, his automobile bumps into another automobile that contains his wife's mother, how can philosophy help him?

Izzy, feeling that the bottom had dropped out of the universe, was walking toward the elevated station when his eye fell upon an old-fashioned carriage standing before a German drinking-place. And through the little window in the back of the carriage he saw the face of a dog pressed tightly against the glass. He drew nearer and stared at the animal. He saw its jaws open, and from within the carriage came the muffled sound of excited barking.

"Beans!" exclaimed Izzy. "Holy Moses!"

You maintain that this was not a very dignified ejaculation, and you may be right. Nevertheless it is exactly what Izzy said. In a twinkling he had opened the carriage door, seized the excited animal in his arms, carefully shut the door, and was running at full speed back to Margulies's house. When the bell rang, Mr. Margulies and Rosie both rushed to the door. It rang like a fire-alarm. The next moment Beans

was leaping frantically upon his mistress, and Izzy, perspiring from running and flushed with triumph, was confronting her father.

"There's the dog, Mr. Margulies," he said. "Can I have my reward?"

Mr. Margulies gazed at him and then slowly scratched his head. "Come inside," he said. He led the way, and just as his portly figure turned into the parlour Izzy seized Rosie in his arms and kissed her once, twice, three times, upon the lips, before he followed her father.

"Fresh!" she whispered after him. But she was smiling. Mr. Margulies motioned to Izzy to sit down. For nearly a minute he looked at him without uttering a word. Then he drew a cigar from his pocket and handed it to Izzy.

"It's a perfecto!" he said.

The door-bell rang again—a short, peremptory ring—and when Margulies opened the door he beheld the tall, gaunt figure of Lapidowitz.

"Vell?" he asked. "Vot iss it?"

"I have kept my promise," said Lapidowitz, in Yiddish. "You told me you lost a dog and would pay a hundred and fifty dollars to get him back. I promised to bring him back to you.

Well, here I am! The dog is outside in the carriage."

Mr. Margulies stared at him, dumfounded. He opened his mouth to speak, but the word that was on his lips was never uttered.

As if shot from a catapult, Beans flew across the hallway, flashed between Margulies's legs, and with a vicious growl seized Lapidowitz by the coat. Margulies had just time to grasp the dog's hind legs when Lapidowitz, with a howl of terror, turned and fled down the steps. For one brief instant he was arrested in his flight. Then there was a sharp, ripping sound, and Margulies observed that Beans held a fragment of Lapidowitz's Prince Albert between his teeth. Lapidowitz took the flight of steps in one bound, jumped into the carriage and, banging the door shut, held it tightly from within. Dennis, opining that something was wrong, drove off.

Margulies meanwhile deposited Beans upon the floor and gazed at him studiously for a moment. Then he kicked him. "If you take Rosie," he said to Izzy, "you got to take dot dog."

Dennis, as we said, drove off. He drove one block. Then he stopped, descended from his

seat, and opened the carriage door. "Come out!" he said. Just that and nothing more. Lapidowitz came out. Dennis shut the door, mounted to his seat, and drove off.

"Hey!" cried Lapidowitz. Dennis did not answer. In fact, he did not even turn his head.

"Vait!" cried Lapidowitz. "I ain'd got a cent! I ain'd got car-fare!"

Still no response from Dennis. Then Lapidowitz, clinging to a lamp-post for support, opened his mouth wide and with all the strength of his lungs, cried aloud,

"Loafer!"

This time Dennis turned his head and smiled. He had a pleasant smile.

IX

The Interrupted Wedding

OF all the phenomena of life the most curious—to me, at least—has always been the tendency of one thing to lead to another. No sooner do you extricate yourself from one dilemma than you find yourself in another so closely related to and consequent upon the first that they might actually be mother and child. The philosophers do not go very exhaustively into this subject, which is a great pity, but if any philosopher should ever be inclined to make a special study of it he is welcome to all the facts in this narrative that may be of service to him.

The late lamented Plansky was a violinist and, according to his widow, fiddled divinely. This, of course, was before his death. Whether or not his musical talent stood him in good stead in his new sphere is not germane to this narrative. The important point is that he left a widow and a violin behind him. To make both ends meet after her husband's death, the widow, Plansky, took in a lodger. The name of the

lodger was Lapidowitz, the gentleman who lived by his wits, despised labour, and loved the good things of life. The widow Plansky spent the greater part of her time expressing her opinion of her lodger, and when Lapidowitz ran short of other subjects of conversation he could talk for hours about the widow Plansky. For the sake of brevity Lapowitz's estimate of his landlady may be tabulated as follows:

"Her shortcomings": *A terrible temper; extremely suspicious; stingy and grasping; lied; cross-eyed; gossiped; constantly threatened to have people arrested; cold-hearted; ignorant; vindictive; impudent; sycophantic.*

Under the heading, "Her good points," is one lone item: *Cooked good coffee for breakfast.*

The widow's estimate of her lodger was much simpler. In her eyes the schnorrer was absolutely and hopelessly good for nothing. Only a woman could have elaborated this quality into the long dissertations the widow Plansky could deliver upon the subject. How near either of them came to the truth has also no bearing upon this narrative. Suffice it that there was no love lost between them.

Lapidowitz owed two weeks' room rent, and rather than discuss the matter with the widow

Plansky he had fallen into the habit of leaving his room early in the morning and returning very late at night. He was sitting one afternoon in Milken's café, idly speculating upon what he would do if he were Sultan of the Earth—a favourite pastime of his when he was not busy trying to borrow money—when Milken handed him a letter.

"It hass been here nearly two veeks, unt alvays I forget it to gif it to you," explained Milken.

Lapidowitz would have upbraided Milken for his neglect if he had not owed him so much money. As it was, he gazed at the letter long and intently, wondering who his correspondent could be. It bore a Russian postmark and was dated nearly five weeks before. He finally opened it and read:

Dear Mr. Lapidowitz:

Your father was a good friend of mine and I owe him a great deal for his kindness to me many years ago. In a few days I shall start for America, and the first thing I shall do will be to call on you. Your father often said if he should die before me he wanted me to keep an eye on his son. I hope we will be good friends.

With great esteem,

IGNATZ BIMBERG.

Bimberg! The name seemed strangely familiar to Lapidowitz, but for a long time he could not place it. He was quite sure that he knew no one of that name in Russia, personally and yet—oh, yes! Now he remembered that an immigrant from his native town, in retailing his store of gossip, had mentioned a man named Bimberg as the wealthiest Jew in the place. And, with Lapidowitz's impulsive, rosy optimism he leaped immediately to the conclusion that it was no other than this wealthy Bimberg who was coming to America and who would surely befriend him out of gratitude to his father.

"Look, Milken!" he cried and handed the proprietor the letter.

"Bimberg?" repeated Milken, when he had read it. "Who iss Bimberg?"

"What? You don't know Bimberg? My! Where did you come from? He is the richest Jew in Russia. He and my father were great friends."

Milken was profoundly impressed, but refused, nevertheless, to lend Lapidowitz a cent upon the strength of the letter.

"Maybe Mr. Bimberg come unt maybe he don't come unt maybe he gifs you a million dol-

lars unt maybe he don't. But till you pay der last ten dollars vot you got off'n me, not vun cent!" was Milken's ultimatum.

Lapidowitz returned to his room determined to establish friendly relations with his landlady and to wheedle a loan out of her upon the strength of the Bimberg letter. He showed her the letter. The widow Plansky scrutinised it carefully, turned it upside down, and held it up to the light. Then she handed it back to Lapidowitz.

"You read it," said she. "I don't know where my glasses are."

Suddenly remembering that the widow could not read, Lapidowitz recited the contents of the letter with such additions, embellishments, embroideries, and improvements that Mrs. Plansky's eyes opened wide with surprise.

"My! What a lot he says in such a little letter!" was her comment. "Who is he?"

"He is the finest man in Russia!" explained Lapidowitz enthusiastically. "He has so much money he couldn't count it in a year. You see, he says in the letter anything I want I can have. So when he comes maybe you can let him have a room."

"He can have the parlour. I never have visitors. When will he be here?"

"He don't say exactly," said Lapidowitz, "but he is sure to come almost any day now. Better get the parlour ready. And, oh, by the way, Mrs. Plansky, I owe you six dollars, don't I?"

Lapidowitz's face wore its most ingratiating smile, and even the widow's stern countenance relaxed.

"You have right," she said.

"So lend me five dollars till comes my friend, and it will make just an even eleven dollars what I owe you."

Lapidowitz's smile had deepened into a smirk that was meant to be playfully affectionate, but every muscle of the widow's face suddenly stiffened.

"People what has rich friends shouldn't borrow money from poor ones," she said. "Mr. Plansky told me I never should lend money, and you get bad luck if you break a promise to the dead."

Lapidowitz retired to his room cursing the widow and her departed husband through every known phase of existence both here and hereafter. There came a tap upon his door a few

minutes later, and the widow entered bearing a violin-case.

"I am getting the parlour ready for your friend," she explained. "You never keep anything in your closet, so I guess I'll keep Mr. Plansky's violin there. Nobody ever uses it, but I want to keep it in a safe place."

Lapidowitz cursed Mr. Plansky's violin. Then he sat down and drew up a list of all his friends on the East Side to whom Mr. Bimberg's letter might appeal as a basis for a loan. After making up the list he began to check off those to whom he already owed money, and when he had completed this task he found that he had checked off the entire list. Lapidowitz sighed. Still, he thought, the unexpected often happens and he might really be doing some of his friends a great injustice. He decided to give them a chance.

For the next two hours Lapidowitz wandered through the Ghetto showing every one the letter he had received, increasing Mr. Bimberg's fortune with each telling and strengthening the bonds of friendship that had existed between Bimberg and the schnorrer's father. Lubarsky took a "flier" and lent Lapidowitz a dollar. Beyond that no amount of coaxing could induce

him to go, and he made it clear to Lapidowitz that if Bimberg ever purchased a house in New York and did not transact his real estate business through Lubarsky he would sue Lapidowitz for all the money he had lent him.

Late that afternoon Lapidowitz returned to Milken's café, seated himself at a table, heaved a long sigh, and ordered a cup of coffee. Then he bought a cigar, lit it, and began to blow smoke rings and, gradually, his mood of dejection passed away and he began to feel at peace with all the world. Lapidowitz never was unhappy long. Having been accustomed to being without money all his life, the lack of it never depressed him beyond the moment when he needed it. As a matter of fact, borrowing a dollar in an afternoon was not such a bad day's work, and the prospect of a friend of his father's coming to America to help him looked better and better the more he thought of it. As is the case with most liars, the stories that Lapidowitz had told about Bimberg's wealth had made a profound impression on himself. In a little while he began to feel positively happy and looked around the café for company.

At a table near the window sat a young man with his head bowed upon his hands, a very pic-

ture of dejection. Lapidowitz knew him slightly—Morris Litolff was his name—and feeling at peace with all the world, hailed him cheerfully.

"You look sad, Mr. Litolff," he exclaimed. "Have you got troubles?"

The young man gazed at him and shook his head with the air of a person to whom life is a despairing void. Lapidowitz crossed the room and seated himself opposite the young man.

"You should cheer up," he said. "I got troubles, too, but it's no use being sad. Is it money?"

Litolff smiled, for he was well acquainted with the characteristics of Lapidowitz.

"No. It ain't money," he said. "If it was money, money would help it. But it's something that nothing in the world can help."

"Well, if it ain't money," said Lapidowitz, as an axiom, "it ain't trouble."

Lapidowitz's success as a schnorrer was largely due to the fact that every one liked him. Erratic, unreliable, and irresponsible as he was, he nevertheless possessed one of those magnetic natures that attract friends, and Litolff, almost before he knew it, found himself pouring into Lapidowitz's ear his tale of woe.

"Monday night I got to go to Chicago," he said. "My uncle has a place in his business for me, and if I don't start Monday night I lose it. Last night Sammy Levine and I go to a ball, and there we meet a girl. We get introduced. Right away I fall head over heels in love. Oh, if you only could see her! Such a shape! Such a face! Such high-toned manners! Sammy gets just as stuck on her as me, and I bet you he goes calling on her every day and some day marries her. To-day is Friday. In three days I got to go away. What kind of a chance have I got? Tell me! If I could only stay I bet she'd like me."

"I bet she would," said Lapidowitz sympathetically. "Who is she?"

"Oh, you don't know her. Her name is Lillie Krauskopf. She's awfully stylish."

"Sure I know her," said Lapidowitz eagerly. "Ain't she old Solly Krauskopf, the delicatessen man's daughter?"

"That's her," said Litolff sadly. "And on Monday I got to go to Chicago!"

Lapidowitz gazed at him in amazement.

"Well, if you like her so much," said he, "why you don't marry her and take her with you?"

An unmarried man whose soul is free of romance takes a less complicated view of a love affair than a lover. But Litolff shook his head.

"Girls ain't like that," he said. "It's easy to see you never had any experience."

"Listen!" said Lapidowitz. "If she would be willing to marry you—right away—tonight—would you take her to Chicago with you?"

"What a question! Sure I would!"

Lapidowitz gazed at him reflectively.

"You know I'm a good talker," he said. "And I know Lillie better than you do. I could say things to her that you couldn't. Besides I was once a schatchen. How would you like it if I went around and had a talk with her? It wouldn't do any harm and—"

"Mr. Lapidowitz," cried the young man, his face aglow with excitement, "if you could get her to do it you'll be best man at the wedding —and I'll give you a fine present!"

"How much?" asked Lapidowitz. The young man hesitated.

"Twenty dollars," he finally said and seeing the glitter in Lapidowitz's eyes, "after the wedding and not before," he added. Lapidowitz made him swear upon the books of Moses that

he would pay the money as soon as the rabbi pronounced them man and wife.

"Now come with me," he said.

"Oh, I couldn't talk to her," said Litolff hastily. "When I see her I lose all my courage."

"Don't be a donkey. You ain't going to see her just yet. You come with me."

He led the young man to the house where his divinity lived and then pointed to a butcher's shop directly opposite it.

"Stand over there," he said. "If I open the window and wave my hand you come up-stairs as fast as you can and rush into the room and give her a kiss—a quick one. Don't lose any time, and don't wait to talk to her. Rush in, say, 'Lillie, my darling!' and kiss her!"

"But—"

"Don't 'but'! Go across the street and wait."

And before Litolff could add another word Lapidowitz was on his way up the stairs. He was in his element. An undertaking more to his taste than to play John Alden with a reward of twenty dollars dangling before his eyes it would have been difficult to imagine. Here was a field for all his powers of persuasion, and he

knew, from experience, that women would always listen to him.

Miss Lillie Krauskopf received him with great cordiality.

"I was awfully lonesome," she said, "and I was just wishing some one would drop in and entertain me."

Lillie was undeniably pretty and pleasing to the eye, but Lapidowitz knew that her father was not in affluent circumstances and wondered why Litolff wanted to marry a girl without a dowry.

"Lillie," he said impressively, "you ought to get married."

"Sure," said Lillie. "Is this a proposal?"

"No! No!" cried Lapidowitz hastily. "But you know how much I think of you, and it would be for your interest to get married—soon. If I were you I'd get married to-night if I had a chance."

Lillie laughed merrily.

"How can I get married unless I'm asked?" she said.

"I know a fine young fellow who is crazy about you," said Lapidowitz. "His name is Morris Litolff."

The blush that mantled in the girl's cheeks told him in a twinkling just how matters stood, and Lapidowitz was shrewd enough to take full advantage of the situation.

"Do you mind if I open the window? It's hot in here." And before the girl could answer he had opened the window and waved his arm.

"Listen, Lillie," he said, and spoke quickly, "Morris is a splendid fellow. He's got to go to Chicago on Monday night. It's the best chance he will ever have. He will get rich out there. He is terribly in love with you, only he is bashful and he is afraid to ask you to marry him right away—to-night, maybe. He didn't tell me to ask you, but I didn't like to see him so unhappy. He can't eat and he can't sleep because he's so crazy about you."

He then went on to describe Litolff's character, his honesty, his courage, the warmth of his feelings. He painted in glowing terms the happiness that would be Lillie's married to so fine a young man, how all the girls would envy her, how beautiful her children were sure to be, and how stylishly she could dress on the fortune Litolff was sure to make. As the words came pouring in a torrent from his lips,

Lillie, with glistening eyes and mouth agape, stood staring at him, dumfounded. And just as he reached the climax of his peroration, hasty steps were heard upon the stairs, the door was flung open, and in rushed Litolff, pale with excitement.

"Lillie, my darling!" he cried and throwing his arms about her kissed her again and again. For a moment the girl stood stunned and seemed incapable of speech or action. Then her cheeks turned rosy red, and Lapidowitz, the sly rascal, saw her arms slowly fold around the young man's neck.

"Hooray!" he cried, waving his hat. "Now I run out and get the rabbi!"

Before a word could be uttered he was gone. Litolff and Lillie looked at each other, and then they laughed and began kissing anew. Presently they sat down and began to talk like sane beings. Litolff, emboldened now that he knew the girl was fond of him, pleaded and explained and argued—and occasionally kissed—to such good effect that Lillie finally yielded to his entreaty to be married immediately. She even confessed that she had fallen in love with him at first sight and had been thinking of him all that day.

"What will everybody say?" was the thought that worried her most.

"As long as we got to live in Chicago, what difference does it make?" responded Litolff. "As long as your mother doesn't object."

"Oh, mamma won't mind," said Lillie calmly. "She got married when she was sixteen. I'm nineteen now, and she thinks I ought to got married long ago."

Then Lapidowitz returned with a long face.

"I seen the rabbi, but he says you got to have a license before you can get married, and it's too late to get a license to-night."

Lillie clapped her hands.

"I'm glad!" she said. "We can get married to-morrow night, and I'll have a chance to get some clothes. And we can invite some of our friends."

Litolff was forced to assent.

"Anyway," he said, "you'll come out to dinner with me to-night, and we'll talk everything over. Mr. Lapidowitz will come too. I owe him a lot."

Lapidowitz held up his two hands behind Lillie's back, shut them and opened them again to indicate the number twenty, but Litolff shook his head. They all went to the nearest

restaurant, where Litolff ordered a more festive meal than Lapidowitz had eaten in many a day. During the dinner it was arranged that Lapidowitz should accompany them to the marriage-license bureau in the morning and, after the license had been secured, he was to hire a small hall on Clinton Street. Now that he was compelled to wait a day Litolff was determined that the wedding should be as elaborate an affair as he could arrange.

"I know a fellow who will get me some musicians, cheap," he said, "and I know a florist who will fix up the flowers. I got about thirty people who I want to invite, and I guess you got a lot of friends, too, Lil. So I'll have some swell refreshments. All you got to do, Mr. Lapidowitz, is to arrange for the hall and tell the rabbi what time to be there. After that you got nothing to do but go home and put on your dress suit and wait for the wedding. You got to be my best man to bring us luck."

"I ain't got a dress suit," said Lapidowitz.

"Oh, never mind. We don't have to have a best man. We can get married just as tight without it, hey, Lil?"

"Oh, I can easy get a dress suit," said Lapidowitz hastily. The prospect of playing an

important part at a function where there was to be music and good things to eat was too alluring to be so easily abandoned.

At the license bureau the following morning Lapidowitz answered so many questions on behalf of both the bride and the groom and dominated the proceedings to such an extent that the clerk asked him sarcastically:

"Say, who's getting married, you or the young chap?"

Lapidowitz insisted on taking possession of the license.

"If I don't show it to the rabbi, he won't come," he explained.

It was with a feeling of great importance that Lapidowitz accomplished his task of hiring the hall and engaging the rabbi, but this satisfactory sensation immediately vanished when he found himself face to face with the problem of equipping himself with a dress suit. He knew that it would be useless to go the rounds of his friends, and attempt to borrow money, for he had called upon them all the day before. He had found, from experience, that five days was the minimum of time that must elapse between visits for any chance of success. He called upon Harris on Rivington Street,

who made a specialty of renting wedding garments for both men and women. Harris peered at him over his spectacles.

"I'm to be best man at Litolff's wedding," said Lapidowitz in the most nonchalant tone he could assume. "Can I hire a dress suit?"

"Best man?" repeated Harris, with a grin. "Sure you can hire a suit. The last one I got left. Four dollars a day and ten dollars deposit."

"Ten dollars deposit? What for?"

"Because the suit is worth twenty dollars, and it don't go out of the shop unless I get a deposit. I couldn't sleep all night if I didn't have a deposit."

"Look here, Harris," said Lapidowitz, in a more genial tone, "I'm a little short, just now. But you know me. And look at this letter that I just got. Mr. Bimberg will hire all his dress suits here if I recommend you. And he's got enough money to hire a dress suit every day of his life."

Harris perused the letter, which by this time was somewhat frayed and finger-marked.

"You're a lucky dog, Lapidowitz," he said, handing back the letter.

"And you'll let me have a dress suit without

a deposit, won't you?" said Lapidowitz eagerly. "I'll tell Mr. Bimberg about it so soon as he comes. And I'll bring the suit back in the morning."

"Who? Me? Without a deposit? Never!"

Lapidowitz strode from the store, slamming the door behind him. He went to his room and for an hour tried to devise some method of raising ten dollars. Milken, he knew, would refuse to lend it. Litolff would see no reason for his having a dress suit at all. The widow Plankskv—a sudden thought shot into his mind, and Lapidowitz sat bolt upright. The violin! Why not pawn it for ten dollars? With the money he was to get from Litolff after the wedding he could redeem it the first thing in the morning and replace it without any one being the wiser. It seemed a brilliant thought, but presently doubts arose in his mind. Could any one possibly say he was stealing the violin? Pshaw! How could a man steal a thing and bring it back? That was only borrowing. That's all. Only borrowing!

He began to reason the matter out. When a man begins to reason out a thing that he has made up his mind to do, it is wonderful how fertile his brain suddenly becomes and how

promptly his arguments overwhelm his conscience. Lapidowitz reasoned thus:

"I rent this room, don't I? And I rent everything in it. And as long as I pay my rent I have the use of everything in the room, don't I? As long as I don't keep anything I can use it, can't I? If I wanted to take the clock off the mantel and carry it around with me, I could, couldn't I? That is, as long as I was sure to bring it back. So what's the difference if the fiddle is in the closet or in the pawn-shop? I'm responsible for it, and when I give up this room the fiddle will be here, won't it? Anyway, it's safer in the pawn-shop."

His reasoning satisfied him completely, yet nevertheless, when he descended the stairs a few minutes later with the violin hidden under his overcoat it was with the stealthy tread and the furtive glances around him of a man who would have felt embarrassed had he been observed. A friendly pawn-broker advanced him ten dollars on the instrument, and with joy in his heart Lapidowitz returned to Harris' store.

"Here is your deposit," he said loftily. "See that you give me a good suit."

Harris selected a suit that he thought likely

to fit the schnorrer and wrapped it up for him.

"It's four dollars a day," he said. "How many days do you want it?"

"How many days does anybody want a dress suit? One day, of course."

"There's no telling," responded Harris.

Lapidowitz spent all of the afternoon and early evening in Milken's café. As it grew dark he became somewhat depressed, and the thought of the widow's violin preyed on his mind. What would she do if she detected her loss? He had known her to call a policeman on the slightest provocation and, in fact, had often told his friends about her mania for having every one arrested.

"It's too bad about young Lezinsky," Milken happened to remark in Yiddish.

"Lezinsky? What did he do?"

"Haven't you heard? He borrowed twenty-five dollars from his boss's cashdrawer without telling him about it and intended to put it back in the morning. He said he often did it. But his boss caught him this time, and he had to go to Jersey while his father is trying to settle it."

A cold shudder thrilled up and down Lapidowitz's spine.

"Why did he have to go to Jersey?" he asked.

"Oh, he's safe over there for a few days. The New York police can't arrest you in Jersey. I guess the boss will take the money from the young fellow's father when he cools down. The boy ain't bad."

"Are you sure they can't arrest you in Jersey?" asked Lapidowitz eagerly.

"Sure I am. It's another state."

Here, at any rate, was a grain of comfort, for, if anything unpleasant happened, he could go to Jersey and wait until Mr. Bimberg arrived. Behind a partition in the rear of the café he changed his clothes, and when he reappeared Milken gazed at him in admiration.

"You look good!" he said.

A few minutes later Lapidowitz was in the hall helping Litolff and Lillie receive their guests. A goodly number of people had already arrived.

"Did you arrange with the rabbi?" asked Litolff.

"Sure I did," said Lapidowitz. "Here he comes by the door, now."

"And the license?"

"I got it in my pocket."

While the young couple were welcoming the rabbi, Lapidowitz swooped down upon the refreshment table. Holding a sandwich between his teeth, as if he feared that it might escape him, he tucked half a dozen more into the pockets of his swallow-tailed coat. The hall was quite small and, by this time, was beginning to fill. The air resounded with the chatter of many voices and the tuning of the orchestra. And, just then, a shrill voice in the doorway cried,

"Is Mr. Lapidowitz here?"

Lapidowitz stood on tiptoe and caught a glimpse of the widow Plansky. He turned pale and let a sandwich fall from his hand. Close by him was an open window. And, oh, joy! a fire-escape ran all the way to the yard in the rear of the building. A quick glance around the room convinced him that he was unobserved. A moment later he was climbing down the iron ladder of the fire-escape.

"I want Mr. Lapidowitz!" repeated the shrill voice. Litolff hastened to approach the speaker.

"What is it you want?" he said.

"I don't want you, anyway," was the snappy

response. "Mr. Milken told me Mr. Lapidowitz is here, and I want to see him."

"I'll find him for you," said Litolff.

In a few minutes the entire room resounded with repetitions of Lapidowitz's name, but there came no response from Lapidowitz.

"I guess he went out for a minute," said Litolff. And then the perspiration suddenly stood upon his forehead.

"He's got the wedding license!"

X

A Night of Horrors

FOR a moment every voice in the room was hushed. The musicians ceased tuning their instruments and began to light cigarettes. They felt that the time to play the wedding march had been temporarily postponed. Litolff walked hurriedly to where the rabbi sat munching a sandwich.

"You can marry us without a license, can't you, Rabbi?" he asked imploringly.

"And go to prison?" retorted the rabbi.

"But Lapidowitz showed you the license, didn't he? You know we got one, don't you?"

"Did he? Don't I? Lapidowitz didn't show me anything. He says you had a license, but I wouldn't believe Lapidowitz, no matter what he said."

Lillie laid her hand upon the rabbi's shoulder and added her plea to Litolff's. "Please, Rabbi, for my sake!" she said, in a voice that would have made a stone wall relent.

But the rabbi was obdurate. "I couldn't do it," he said. "The law is strict, and if I don't see the license maybe I go to jail. I'm just as sorry as anybody else, because business is business. Anyway, maybe Lapidowitz will soon come back. Let us wait a while."

And then began a long wait. Litolff and Lillie sat hand in hand apart from the guests, Lillie worried and distressed, Litolff raging in his soul. A dozen methods of punishing Lapidowitz occurred to him, but they all were either too mild or too impracticable. A sound thrashing, he thought, would probably be most effective. Meanwhile the assemblage was thinning out.

Litolff drew his father aside. "Look here, father," he said, "you take mamma and Lillie's folks down the street to Milken's café and get something good to eat. I don't know when that fellow Lapidowitz will come back, and Lillie's mother looks as if she's going to cry. I'll send for you when Lapidowitz comes."

The rabbi approached Litolff. "I guess the refreshments are all gone," he said.

Litolff glanced at the empty table. "I guess so," he said.

The rabbi sighed. "I thought maybe you

had some put away," he remarked. Then he settled himself comfortably in a chair and soon began to doze.

At the end of an hour Litolff, starting as if from a trance, observed that all the guests had gone. Most of them had approached him and had murmured some farewell or some expression of sympathy, but no impression had been recorded upon his mind. Only one woman besides Lillie had remained in the room, and Litolff wondered who she was.

"Please don't wait on our account," he said politely. "The wedding may not take place for some time."

"I ain't waiting on your account," said the woman. "I got to see Mr. Lapidowitz."

"Oh! You're the lady who came to see Lapidowitz!"

"I am. And what is more, I don't go home till I see him."

Litolff had no objection to her remaining. In fact, had she gone and the rabbi continued to sleep, he would have felt too discouraged to wait longer. He was glad that she stayed.

"Are you sure he'll come back?" asked Lillie.

Litolff's brow wrinkled. "Nobody can be sure what such a loafer would do," he replied.

"But I promised him twenty dollars after the wedding, and if Lapidowitz is alive he'll come back so soon as he can. What that man wouldn't do for twenty dollars isn't worth talking about."

Just then the rabbi awoke and looked at his watch. "It's getting late," he said, "and I guess I go home."

"Oh, please, Rabbi," implored Litolff, "don't go yet. We got to get married tonight."

"I'm so hungry!" said the rabbi. Litolff ran downstairs and brought up some sandwiches which he placed upon a table. The rabbi took two and the Widow Plansky took two, holding one in one hand while they ate the other.

"Can't we go down-town and get another license?" suggested Lillie.

Litolff shook his head. "It's too late," he said. "And to-morrow is Sunday, and on Monday I got to go to Chicago. No, dear, there's nothing to do but wait. But, oh, when I lay my eyes on Lapidowitz!"

When the sandwiches were gone the rabbi fell asleep again and snored for nearly fifteen minutes. Then he awoke with a start and looked at his watch.

"What's the use of waiting?" he asked. "I can marry you to-morrow just as well."

"If he don't come back to-night he may not come back to-morrow," said Litolff. "Don't be in a hurry, Rabbi."

"But I'm so thirsty!" said the rabbi. Litolff ran downstairs and brought up some bottled beer. When the rabbi had quenched his thirst he fell asleep again, and Mrs. Plansky, observing that no one was paying the slightest attention to her, helped herself to what remained of the beer. Presently Lillie's head sank upon her lover's shoulder, and she fell asleep. Litolff and the widow alone were awake, Litolff silently cursing every bone in Lapidowitz's body and the widow sitting with folded arms, engrossed in her own thoughts.

When Lapidowitz reached the foot of the fire-escape he found himself in a yard at the rear of the building. He opened a door leading into the hallway, heard the tuning of the instruments and the hum of voices in the hall overhead, and seeing no one, made his way quickly to the street. He glanced swiftly to right and left. There was no policeman in sight. With a sigh of relief Lapidowitz turned westward

and walked as quickly as he could without attracting attention. Had he dared he would have run. It was fortunate for him that at Jewish weddings it is the custom for men to wear their hats. Still, he had left his overcoat behind, and the night was chilly. People stared at the tall, bearded figure in a dress suit and silk hat walking so swiftly, but Lapidowitz paid no heed to people. Policemen were all that interested him.

At the Bowery he saw one. The bluecoat stood on the corner swinging his stick, and Lapidowitz, with a guilty conscience, was sure that he was being closely scrutinised. It required considerable effort of the will to look the policeman boldly in the face, but when Lapidowitz had nerved himself to the ordeal he found that the policeman was grinning at him. Lapidowitz's heart began to beat again, and he grinned amiably in return.

He reached the ferry at the foot of Desbrosses Street just in time to see the boat pull out of the slip.

"How soon goes the next one?" he asked a man who stood at the ferry-gate.

"I don't know. Ask the policeman over there!" was the reply. Lapidowitz felt his

heart sinking. What was the policeman doing in this particular spot? And why was he staring at Lapidowitz so suspiciously? Did he know? Was he preparing to pounce upon him for stealing a violin? Lapidowitz shuddered and started to enter the ferry-house, but there seemed to be some magnetic attraction that drew him toward the policeman. He began to feel panicky. And then, in the spirit of desperation that often overcomes the most hardened criminal, he determined to put all to the test. He approached the policeman with a jaunty air and a smirk upon his face, but with trepidation in his soul.

"I—I want to go to Jersey," he stammered.

The policeman transferred a substance that he was masticating from one cheek to the other. "Who's keepin' ye back?" he inquired jovially.

Lapidowitz's heart leaped with joy. "Nobody!" he exclaimed. "Why should they? But the boat is gone. Comes soon another?"

"Oh, sure! In ten minutes."

And now Lapidowitz was perfectly contented. When the boat arrived he seated himself in the "Gents' Cabin" and began to eat the sandwiches that he carried in his pocket. Subconsciously his mind had been upon those sand-

wiches from the moment he left the hall. When the boat reached the New Jersey shore Lapidowitz was the first passenger to leave it. He was in splendid spirits. He had eluded the Widow Plansky and the police, and now all he had to do was to remain in New Jersey until the next day, when he could claim his twenty dollars, redeem the violin and, in some surreptitious manner, return it to the closet in his room.

It was rather chilly to walk the streets in a dress suit, and Lapidowitz asked the way to the nearest hotel. It suddenly occurred to him to take stock of his financial resources, and he found that he had only fifty cents. This discovery acted as a damper upon his cheerfulness. It was nearly nine o'clock when he entered the Star Hotel close by the ferry, and seating himself in a chair opposite the clerk's desk, began to think. They probably would not let him sit there all night, he feared, and there was something about the clerk's aspect that did not invite an appeal to charity. Besides which he did not like the way the clerk occasionally looked at him.

"Just like I was a loafer!" he thought.

By this time Litolff and Lillie were probably married and had forgotten all about him. The

recollection of the festive scene in the hall, in which he might have played a conspicuous part, brought a sigh to his lips. But the thought of the Widow Plansky banished all regrets. By this time, too, Mrs. Plansky had probably set a hundred policemen on his track. Lapidowitz shuddered.

"How much costs the cheapest room?" he suddenly asked.

"One dollar," replied the clerk.

"I got only a half," said Lapidowitz.

"We haven't got any half-rooms," said the clerk sarcastically.

It occurred to Lapidowitz to pawn something. He took a mental inventory of his attire and wondered what article he could best dispense with. Of course he could easily get fifty cents for his hat, but he needed the hat. The shoes and trousers were equally out of the question. The vest—ah! there was an idea! He could pin the front of his coat together so as to conceal the absence of the vest. He left the hotel and roamed the streets until he came to a sign of the three golden balls. Then he rapped loudly upon the door. Curiously enough, it was at that moment that he remembered he was paying Harris four dollars a day for the dress

suit and that he probably would have to pay for two days. Lapidowitz groaned. A window opened overhead.

"Vot iss?" asked a forbidding voice.

"My name is Lapidowitz. I need a dollar. Can you come down-stairs?"

"Lapidowitz? From New York?" asked the pawnbroker quickly.

"That's me? You know me?"

"You got a cheek! Go away or I call a policeman!" And the window shut with a bang.

"Only half a dollar on a vest from a swallow-tailer suit!" cried Lapidowitz. But there came no answer. Lapidowitz sought other pawnshops, but the owners either did not live over their stores or refused to respond to his knocking. For two hours he wandered about in the vain attempt to pawn his vest. Then he returned to the hotel and resumed his chair. It suddenly occurred to him to examine all the pockets of his dress suit—perhaps the last man who had hired it had left some money behind. In the course of his search his hand came in contact with a folded paper and for an instant his heart beat faster. He drew the paper forth. It was Litolff's marriage license.

The expression of hopeless bewilderment that

overspread Lapidowitz's face attracted the clerk's attention.

"What's up now?" he asked. Lapidowitz did not reply. His mind was struggling to grasp the situation. The rabbi could not have married them. What were they doing? And his twenty dollars!

"What costs it to telephone to New York?" he asked excitedly.

"Fifteen cents," said the clerk.

Lapidowitz found the telephone number of the hall and called it up. "Please get Mr. Litolff on the telephone," he asked. "He's upstairs at a wedding. Yes. I'll wait. Ten minutes? Can't you go quicker? It's terribly important!"

The clerk looked at his watch. "It's fifteen cents for five minutes' conversation."

Lapidowitz, with the receiver of the telephone pressed against his ear, gazed at the clerk with that expression with which the victims in the Roman arena probably looked at the lions. But the clerk only yawned. Somewhere in the rear of the room there was a clock, and Lapidowitz heard it ticking. It ticked louder than any clock in the world had ever ticked before.

"Can't you hurry?" cried Lapidowitz into

the telephone, but he might as well have talked against a stone wall.

"Through?" presently asked the operator.

"No, no! *Gott in Himmel,* no!" cried Lapidowitz.

"Five minutes are up," said the clerk, looking at his watch. Lapidowitz wondered what the possibilities were of the clerk dropping dead. "He will come soon," he said in as pleasant a voice as he could command, but the clerk only drew a penknife from his pocket and began to sharpen a pencil.

"Through?" asked "Central" again.

"No!" shouted Lapidowitz. "So soon as I get through I tell you. Keep away!"

"That's ten minutes," said the clerk, looking at his watch. Ten minutes! Forty-five cents gone, and only five cents to keep him all the night! And just then, when Lapidowitz thought he would split from the uproarious ticking of the clock, the voice of Litolff answered.

"It that you, Lapidowitz?"

"Yes! It's me! Say—oh, don't talk like that! Stop it! I won't listen! Shut up!"

He clapped his hand over the mouthpiece, and turned to the clerk.

"How he can swear! Ts! Ts! It ain't right!" he said, shaking his head.

"Now listen, Litolff," he went on, when the voice at the other end of the telephone paused. "I find the license in my pocket. I'm in New Jersey by the Star Hotel. It's right by the Desbrosses Street ferry. You and Lillie and the rabbi come over here, and you can get married right here just as well. No! I can't! No! Never mind why, but I can't come over to New York. I got a reason. Some day I tell you. Hurry up now, because I only got five cents left and I wait right here for you. Good-bye!"

"There!" he exclaimed triumphantly, as he hung up the receiver. "Now everything is all right."

"Why can't you go to New York?" asked the clerk suspiciously.

Lapidowitz reddened. His first impulse was to tell the clerk to mind his own business, but he feared that such a reply might arouse deeper suspicions in the clerk's mind.

"Oh, it's only a mistake about something," he responded airily. "There is a person who I don't want to see in New York."

"Most people who come over here like that,"

remarked the clerk significantly, "are running away from the police."

"Not me!" exclaimed Lapidowitz quickly. "I ain't afraid of policemen. Even if I should be they could arrest me here."

This last touch, he thought, was sure to allay the clerk's suspicions. But the clerk's next words filled him with dismay.

"Sure they could," he said. "Some people think they're safe from the police over here. All that anybody's got to do is to point you out as a suspicious character and any policeman here will hold you until they hear from the police across the river. The only thing is if you don't go back willingly there's a lot of red tape about extradition and all that sort of thing."

"They hold you?" asked Lapidowitz limply.

"That's what they do. Now if I knew you were wanted in New York for a crime, all I'd have to do would be to call a cop and he'd hold you and telephone to the police in New York."

"I didn't do any crime," cried Lapidowitz. "I guess I go out and see if my friends have came over the ferry."

Lapidowitz left the hotel with a cold perspiration upon his forehead. Even here in New Jersey he was not safe from the clutches of the law.

What a fool Milken was to tell him that cock-and-bull story about criminals being safe in this state. Still, he thought, the Widow Plansky would probably never dream of his being in New Jersey, and Litolff would be too absorbed in his own affairs to pay much attention to any suspicions that might arise in his mind. Nevertheless, it was with considerable nervousness that he awaited the coming of the ferry-boat.

It finally bumped its way into the slip, and Lapidowitz, peering through the gate, saw the passengers standing in groups on the deck. He scanned them closely, but at first could not discern Litolff. Just as the gates were open, however, he caught sight of him and caught sight, likewise, of the Widow Plansky standing close behind him. There were no bystanders to hear his shout of terror and none to see him turn and run at the top of his speed. Looking neither to right nor to left, he ran nearly a block when he observed that he was overtaking a trolley car. At the same moment the conductor caught sight of him, and thinking he was running after the car, pulled the bell-cord. Lapidowitz boarded the car almost breathless.

"Where goes the car?" he asked.

"Newark," replied the conductor.

"That's good!" said Lapidowitz.

As soon as Litolff returned from his telephone conversation with Lapidowitz he woke the rabbi. "That loafer just telephoned," he explained. "He's over in a hotel in Jersey City waiting for us. I couldn't get him to come over. Do you mind, Rabbi, coming with us?"

It required considerable persuasion to induce the rabbi to accompany them to Jersey City, but he finally consented.

"I go with you!" said Mrs. Plansky, who had been sitting in silence for several hours. Litolff stared at her.

"I got to see Mr. Lapidowitz," she explained. "It's important, and if he don't come here I go to Jersey."

"I don't care," said Litolff. "Come along if you like."

When they reached the Star Hotel the rabbi and Mrs. Plansky yawned sleepily. Litolff looked around for Lapidowitz.

"Is Mr. Lapidowitz around here anywhere?" he asked the clerk.

"A tall chap with whiskers, in a dress suit and a plug hat?" Litolff nodded.

"He was here a minute ago. He just went out to look for you, if you're the people he was expecting."

Litolff ran back to the ferry-house and gazed around the street and described Lapidowitz to half a dozen persons, and, after a quarter of an hour, returned to the hotel without him.

"The loafer is gone!" he exclaimed.

"I guess he'll come back soon. He said he only had fifty cents, and he blew in forty-five cents telephoning for you. He can't go far on five cents."

But the clerk did not know Lapidowitz. He had paid his five cents and was sitting alone in the car wondering what he would do upon his arrival in Newark, when the conductor again asked him for his fare.

"I just paid it!" said Lapidowitz in indignant surprise.

"It's five cents to the city limits and five cents more to Newark!" the conductor explained. Lapidowitz felt his heart stop beating again. After feeling in every pocket for the money that he knew was not there, he explained to the conductor that he had left all his change in his overcoat pocket—an explanation so plausible from a man in a dress suit that the conductor not only

volunteered to pay his fare, but offered to lend him a dime in addition.

"Make it a quarter!" said Lapidowitz eagerly. "I write down your name and address and send you the money with good interest so soon as I get home."

The conductor cheerfully acquiesced, and when Lapidowitz arrived in Newark he was the proud owner of a quarter of a dollar. He had also decided upon a plan of action. As long as Mrs. Plansky was in New Jersey it would be safe for him to return home with the violin. It was already after midnight, but he knew that if he had the money he would have no difficulty in arousing the pawnbroker and redeeming the fateful violin. He went to the nearest telephone and called up the Star Hotel.

"This is Mr. Lapidowitz," he said.

"Yes," came the clerk's voice. "There's some one here who is waiting for you."

Lapidowitz did not give Litolff an opportunity to express any of his thoughts. "Listen, Litolff," he began rapidly. "I'm in Newark. I ain't coming back. Why? It's a secret reason and I can't tell you. You promised me twenty dollars after you got married. Promise me now you will give me the twenty dollars when

I give you the license, and I will tell you where I am, and you can come and get it. I could ask for more, but I'm an honest man and only want what's right. You got to swear you'll pay it right on the spot. It's no use! I ain't going to Jersey City. It can't be done."

When Litolff had finally agreed to his proposition Lapidowitz told where he was and said he would wait on the nearest street corner.

The rabbi was highly indignant, and it required the utmost efforts of both Lillie and Litolff to induce him to wait any longer. It was nearly three-quarters of an hour later when Litolff, pale and furious, met Lapidowitz on the street corner.

"Mr. Litolff," began Lapidowitz, with outstretched hands, "believe me—"

"I wouldn't believe you under oath. Give me that license!"

Without a word Lapidowitz handed him the marriage license. Litolff examined it under a lamp-post, put it in his pocket, drew out a roll of bills, and counted out twenty dollars. These he handed to Lapidowitz.

"That, I suppose, is all you want, isn't it?" he asked quietly.

Lapidowitz counted the money, thrust it into his pocket and drew himself up haughtily.

"If you don't speak like a gentleman, that is all," he replied with dignity.

The next instant Litolff's fist shot out and landed with such energy upon Lapidowitz's nose that the latter fell upon the sidewalk. Even before Lapidowitz could raise his voice to shout any of the curses that came swiftly to his mind, Litolff was running to catch a trolley car that would take him back to his belated wedding.

It was a weary, aching, and unhappy Lapidowitz who, at break of day, stole softly up the stairs of the house in which he lived, with the Widow Plansky's violin under his arm. He had gone to Milken's café, which kept open all night, and changed his clothes. He had awakened the pawnbroker and redeemed his violin. He had awakened Harris, and, after a long wrangle, had received two dollars out of the ten he had left as security for the dress suit. Harris had insisted upon charging for two days and told him that he was quite lucky to get off without paying for the wear and tear of the suit, which looked as a dress suit usually does

when it has been up all night. And his nose ached from Litolff's blow.

He could not turn the key of his door in the lock, and when he turned the handle he found that the door was not locked. It opened, but only an inch. A barricade of some kind within the room prevented it from opening further.

"It must be a policeman!" was Lapidowitz's first thought. But the possession of the violin gave him courage. He could say that he had lent it to a musician—he wondered why he had not thought of that before. He tapped softly upon the door. A guttural voice in pristine Yiddish answered from within.

"It's no use. You can't get in, and I won't get out until Lapidowitz returns."

After the excitement of the evening Lapidowitz was upon the verge of collapse. "I'm Lapidowitz!" he answered. "Who is it?"

"Lapidowitz!" cried the voice joyfully. "*Gott sei dank!*"

Lapidowitz heard the creaking of a man rising quickly out of bed and heard a bureau and a table and some chairs pushed across the floor. Then the door opened, and in the dawn he beheld a grizzled-haired, jolly-looking person, whose ringlets of hair over the ears and his gaberdine

betokened the newly arrived Russian immigrant, and whose ragged clothes and unkempt appearance Lapidowitz, with a sinking heart, recognised as those of a Ghetto schnorrer. He entered the room and, without a word, restored the violin to its place in the closet. Then he lit the gas and calmly surveyed the figure before him. Yes, it was unmistakable.

"I'm Bimberg," said the man. "Your father —oh, how good he always was to me! I have been dying to see you."

Lapidowitz sank wearily into a chair. He had come to the end of his emotions.

"But that terrible woman!" Bimberg went on. "As soon as she saw me she told me to get out. She said she wouldn't have me in the house. And when I told her who I was she said some things about you that I wouldn't even repeat. But I wouldn't leave the room because I knew how glad you would be to see me. I pushed the bureau and the table against the door so that she couldn't come in. Then she said she would go out and find you and if you didn't put me out she would put us both out. My! The names she called us! And she was always talking about some rich Bimberg."

Lapidowitz swallowed a lump that kept rising

to his throat. "Why didn't you go to some hotel?" he asked.

"A hotel?" repeated Bimberg, with the tips of his fingers upon his breast. "Me go to a hotel? Where should I get the money to go to a hotel? I didn't even take my clothes off. I was just waiting for you. See! Here's my satchel!"

He pointed to a tattered object bound with innumerable pieces of twine and rope. Lapidowitz sighed and drew a dollar from his pocket.

"It's late," he said weakly. "Here is some money. Three doors away on the right as you go out is a hotel. I'll see you when I wake up."

Bimberg, yawning, took the money, gathered up his dilapidated baggage, and with a hearty "Sleep well!" went out of the room. Lapidowitz went to bed, but could not sleep. His night's adventures were completely wiped from his mind. It did not even occur to him that the widow Plansky knew nothing of the absence of the violin, but was merely bent upon dispossessing an unwelcome lodger. He forgot that his nose ached from its encounter with Litolff's fist. In fact, there was absolutely no coherence in his thoughts. In a vague, benumbed way, he was thinking of Bimberg!

XI

Lapidowitz Meets Greek

NIGHT had fallen while Lapidowitz sat upon a bench in Tompkins Square waiting for something to turn up. Tompkins Square was rather far from his usual haunts, but Lapidowitz was tired of being dunned by his creditors, and inasmuch as he owed nearly everybody whom he knew and as he knew nearly everybody in the Ghetto, he had, for the nonce, stepped beyond the Ghetto's confines to rest and to think. The object of this explanation is to point out that Lapidowitz's own personal predilection had as much to do with his sitting down in Tompkins Square as any caprice of fate. Lapidowitz always blamed fate when things went wrong, taking credit to himself, of course, when matters came out right.

He had come, once more, near to the end of his resources. His assets, as he figured them, amounted to seventy-five cents in his pocket,—and the widow Poliansky. The widow was over

fifty and not beautiful. In fact, it even pained Lapidowitz to think of her; but she wore diamond earrings, and she had cast tender eyes upon Lapidowitz. Wherefore he had decided that if the worst came to the worst he would marry her. And now he sat wondering how near the worst had come to the worst, and whether there was not time and space between for something to turn up.

If you wait long enough for something to turn up, something turns up. This is one of nature's beneficent laws. It may be a stroke of good fortune, or it may be only a thunder-storm. But it is sure to be something, the only trouble being that it is not given to every one to know immediately whether this something be good or bad. In the case of Lapidowitz something turned up almost immediately.

A portly son of Israel seated himself, with many creaks and groans, upon the bench beside Lapidowitz and, with a grimace that was meant for a friendly smile, remarked, "A fat man ain'd got no bizness to walk much, ain'd it?"

Lapidowitz nodded, gazed at the sky, and sighed.

"You got troubles?" asked the stranger sympathetically.

"You bet I got!" answered Lapidowitz fervently. And a few minutes later he found himself unburdening his heart into the stranger's ears. It was a sad story that he told, and he told it well. Any one who did not know Lapidowitz would have believed it. It touched his hearer's heart.

"I tell you vot," said the fat man. "I gif you a chob by my store. It ain'd a big chob, but it iss better as not'ings. Here iss my card. You come around by der morning at seven o'glock."

"Sefen o'glock?" repeated Lapidowitz.

The man nodded. "I know id iss late," he said, "but I don'd get down before dot. I gif you a chob to come efry day by six o'clock, make open der store, und sveep it ouid."

"Unt how late I haf to work?" asked Lapidowitz.

"Undil eight o'glock by nights. I gif you five dollars der veek in der commencement. I know it ain'd much, but you say you haf not a cent got, so it iss better as not'ings."

Lapidowitz took the card which the stranger had handed to him and tore it in half. "Maybe I'm poor," he said, "but I ain'd a loafer! Six

o'glock in der morning! Five dollars der veek! Such a chob!"

The stranger slowly rose. "Maybe you ain'd a loafer," he said, "but if you ain'd I don't know vot iss vun!"

And he walked off, leaving Lapidowitz muttering indignantly to himself: "Six o'glock! Five dollars! Such a chob!"

A half-hour went by. Lapidowitz continued to sit and think and wait for something to turn up, and again something turned up. Fate was good to Lapidowitz this day. A slender, pock-marked individual, with but one eye, came sauntering along, and took the seat that the fat man had vacated. Without a word to Lapidowitz he drew from his pocket a huge roll of bills and began counting them. The process interested Lapidowitz immensely. It was too dark for him to see the denominations of the bills, but their bulk was impressive. Lapidowitz began to wonder what he would do if the man suddenly dropped dead. Instead of dropping dead, however, the man pocketed the money, turned to Lapidowitz with a pleasant smile, and remarked,

"I hate them Jews!"

For a moment Lapidowitz was taken aback. Then a sudden anti-Semitic wave swept through

him, and he nodded sympathetically. "Dey iss no good," he said. "I am vun because I can't help it, but I don't like dem!"

"Oh, you're all right," the man said. "I seen that the moment I looked at you. But them dogs in the tenement-houses is a bad lot. I live 'way up in the Bronx, and I got to come down here every month to collect the rents in that big tenement-house over there I don't speak their lingo, and I tell you it's hard work making them pay up. I wish I had some one to collect the rents for me. I'd be willing to give him half the profits if he'd save me the trouble of coming down from the Bronx every month."

Lapidowitz gripped the bench tightly and tried to repress his eagerness. "I tell you vot," he said with forced calmness. "I got not'ings to do. I collect der rents for you so dot you don't got to come down from der Bronnix."

The man gazed at him suspiciously and shook his head. "I'm sure you're all right," he said, "but, you see, I don't know you. It's a lot o' money to handle—over five hundred dollars a month—and half the collector's share would only be worth twenty-five dollars to you. It don't amount to much."

Twenty-five dollars a month for collecting

rents! Lapidowitz's head fairly swam. It would only be a few hours' work each month because he would know how to handle any tenant who showed signs of delinquency. With painful eagerness he proceeded to disclose his identity. He told the stranger his name and his address. He told him the entire history of his life, embellishing it beautifully as he proceeded and giving the names of all the prominent people in the Ghetto whom he knew, as proof of his veracity. But the stranger only shook his head.

"You'd have to put up a bond or a deposit for security," he said. "If you had a couple o' hundred dollars to leave with me or my bank it'd be all right. Because, you see, business is business."

"Vare can I see you to-morrow night?" asked Lapidowitz.

"You can come up to my office in the Bronx," said the stranger, "or—wait here a minute. I'll be right back."

Lapidowitz watched the man walk across the street and into the tenement-house that he had indicated. Two hundred dollars! How could he possibly raise such a sum? And yet it was little enough to give as security for an income

of twenty-five dollars a month. The stranger returned, frowning, and stood before Lapidowitz.

"He ain't come home yet," he said. "That's the old story. So to-morrow night I'll have to come down from the Bronx again. If you care to see me I'll be siting right here about this time, waiting for that tenant to come home. And I'll bet he won't come at that. Well, good night, mister."

"Good night!" cried Lapidowitz cordially. "I come sure to-morrow night."

Lapidowitz entered Milken's Café and ordered a slivovitz.

"Cash or on der account?" asked Milken.

Lapidowitz frowned. "Except I say different it goes on der account," he said.

Milken brought him a glass of third-rate slivovitz and then seated himself at Lapidowitz's table.

"Barish hass a big bar mitzvah party for his liddle boy to-night," he said meaningly. "V'y didn't you go?"

"Bar mitzvah parties don'd interest me," said Lapidowitz. "Vot vould you do if you vos in my place? I got a chancet to make tventy-

five dollars a month if I can get two hundert dollars for segurity. How can I do it?"

Milken grinned. "If you had two hundert dollars, Lapidowitz," he said, "I vould nefer see you until it all vos gone. By Barish's bar mitzvah party iss Mr. Liebenstein, Mr. Gordonsky, Mr. Lubarsky, Mr. Semel, unt all der people vot hass two hundert dollars to lend you. V'y you don't go? Barish could easy gif you two hundret dollars."

Lapidowitz owed Milken nearly two hundred dollars, and while Milken liked him he could not help laughing at the schnorrer's audacity. Yet he had given Lapidowitz an idea. The schnorrer's brain worked at a gallop for a few minutes, and then, with the happy smile of a man who has solved a difficult problem, he left the place. He returned to thrust his head into the doorway and ask,

"Vare iss dot party?"

"In Excelsior Hall," said Milken. "Don't be foolish. If you ain't got a invitation you can't get in."

Lapidowitz grinned, but did not answer. He went to a jeweller's store on Grand Street and bought the most brilliant pair of sleeve-buttons

that fifty cents could purchase. By artificial light they glittered and sparkled most beautifully. Oh, the joyous night lights that make every crystal a diamond, and all that glitters real gold! What an effect those lights have had upon the history of mankind! And what a temptation it is to speculate upon them and let the imagination ramble!

But we must neither speculate nor ramble. We have Lapidowitz to deal with.

At the entrance to Excelsior Hall he was stopped by an attendant, who asked him to show his ticket.

"Tell Mrs. Barish," said Lapidowitz, "dot a chentleman here iss vot got a present for her little boy."

A bar mitzvah party is given to celebrate the fact that a boy has reached the age of thirteen and become a full-fledged communicant of the Jewish church. And the attendant could not help admiring Lapidowitz. He delivered the message and returned with the answer, " 'Anybody,' she says, 'vot got a present for Jakey iss welcome!' "

And a few moments later, Lapidowitz, after elbowing his way through a dense throng, pre-

sented the sleeve-buttons to the heir of the house of Barish and received Mrs. Barish's fulsome thanks.

"Six times I said to my husband to invite you," she explained, "und efry time he forget it."

"A invitation," replied Lapidowitz, grandly, "iss not in my mind. But such a sveet little boy vot you got should haf efryt'ing vot I can gif him."

Inasmuch as this sentiment reflected the exact feeling of the boy's mother she beamed cordially upon the schnorrer. "In der corner," she said, "a table iss vit' sandviches und cakes. You should go und eat all you can."

Lapidowitz lost no time in finding this table, and after eating all he could hold he filled his pockets with sandwiches and slices of cold meat. A hand fell upon his shoulder and he turned to behold the tear-stained countenance of his host.

"Nefer vill I forgif myself," said Barish, in a broken voice, "for not inviting you. My vife hass told me vot a beautiful present you gif to Jakey. Oh, Lapidowitz, diss iss such a happy night in my life."

"Der last cent vot I got," said Lapidowitz, hastily cramming half a chicken into his coat

pocket, "I gif for dot lufly boy vot you got. Sveet little Jakey!"

Lapidowitz paused to rub his handkerchief over his eyes, whereupon Barish fell upon his shoulder and wept outright.

"Say, Mr. Barish," Lapidowitz went on, clutching his host tightly, "I got a fine chancet to make tventy-five dollars a month by collecting rents. Only two hundret dollars I need for segurity. You—my old friend, der papa uf sveet little Jakey—you surely vill help me."

Barish broke loose from the schnorrer's embrace and drew out his pocketbook. He handed Lapidowitz three dollars. "From der bottom uf my heart!" he said. "You pay it back next veek if you like. Excuse me now because I must talk to efrybody."

Lapidowitz espied Lubarsky, the wealthy real-estate dealer, drinking champagne at one of the side tables. He leaned over his shoulder and whispered to him, "Could I see you for a minute about a bizness?" he asked.

Lubarsky turned, saw who it was, and exclaimed jovially: "Hello, Lapidowitz! How did you get in? Sit down and haf a drink to little Jakey's health."

Lapidowitz shook his head. "I nefer drink

ven I got bizness on der brain, Mr. Lubarsky. Listen! Such a chancet vot I got to make tventy-five dollars a month! All I need is—"

"Money," interrupted Lubarsky. "Sit down, Lapidowitz. Here iss five dollars. Not a cent more. Dot makes forty-six vot you owe me. Now sit down und haf a glass uf champagne und shut up und be a chentleman. If it vosn't a bar mitzvah party I vouldn't gif you a cent."

Lapidowitz pocketed the money and hastened across the room. He had caught sight of the widow Poliansky making her way through the crowd toward the supper-table. She greeted him cordially.

"Dear Mr. Lapidowitz!" she exclaimed in Yiddish. "Come along with me, and we will eat some cold chicken together. I love cold chicken when I'm hungry!"

By the time they reached the table, it had been entirely relieved of its burden of cold chicken. But Lapidowitz, with a mischievous smile, whispered into the widow's ear, "Come over to a quiet corner, and I will show you a surprise."

When they had found a nook where no one could overhear them, Lapidowitz drew half a chicken from his pocket.

"I kept it for you!" he said unblushingly. "I knew you liked cold chicken, and I knew if you didn't come soon it would all be gone."

"Oh, Mr. Lapidowitz!" cried the widow.

His gallantry overwhelmed her, and she could do nothing but gaze at him with soulful eyes. In spite of the irregularity of her features she really had nice eyes and was very lavish in her use of them. Lapidowitz tried to project his soul into his eyes as he returned her gaze. "Mrs. Poliansky," he said, "you are a fine business lady, and maybe you can give me some advice. I have such a fine chance to make tventy-five dollars a month—oh, so easy!—if I only could raise two hundred dollars for security. If I had a regular income like that the first thing I would think of is to get married. Now what would you advise me to do?" He drew a sandwich from his pocket and began to eat it.

"I think it would be a good thing for you to get married," answered the widow. "Every man when he is as old as you are should be married."

"Yes, but what I mean is, what would you advise me to do about getting two hundred dollars?"

The widow, her mouth full of cold chicken,

looked around the room. "Over there is Mr. Semel and Mr. Liebenstein and Mr. Gordonsky and Mr. Barish and Mr. Lubarsky. They could easily afford to lend you two hundred dollars. Mr. Semel is my banker, and I know he is very rich. I would lend it myself only my husband made me promise before he died that I never would lend a cent to any man until I got married again."

Lapidowitz looked at her reproachfully. "I will do what you say," said he. "I will ask Mr. Semel for the money. And if I get the job I will come around to see you."

"I will be so glad to see you," said the widow with a coquettish smile.

"The homely old hag!" muttered Lapidowitz as he left her side. "I would have to be hungry before I married her."

He had never attempted to borrow money of Mr. Semel. The banker's reputation for generosity was not such as to encourage a prospective borrower. But Lapidowitz was determined to leave no chance untried, and seeing Semel lounging idly against the wall, smoking and apparently in genial humour, approached him boldly.

"Mr. Semel," he said, "I haf came to talk bizness."

Semel's whole attitude seemed to stiffen, and his lips closed tightly upon his cigar.

"I need two hundert dollars," continued the schnorrer. "You haf lots uf money. Two hundret dollars make no difference vit' you. Vit' me it means a job for tventy-five dollars a month. Now vot I vould like to say—"

"Vait a minute," said Semel, taking a roll of bills from his pocket. "Chust vait vun minute." He counted the money carefully. Then he took from the roll a dollar bill. "If you don't tell me any more about der scheme," he said, "I gif you a dollar. If you don't like it, den I listen because I got not'ing else to do. But you don't get a cent. I haf two schnorrers vot come to me efry veek, unt vit' dem I haf enough."

Lapidowitz took the dollar and silently cursed Semel from Dan to Beersheba. After that he tried Gordonsky, Liebenstein, and a dozen others. The festive spirit of the evening seemed to have the effect of making them all generous. The two-hundred-dollar proposition no one seemed to take seriously, but the net result of

the night's work was that Lapidowitz left Excelsior Hall with nearly forty dollars in his pocket.

All that night he could not sleep. He tried to think of a way to overcome the real-estate agent's insistence upon security, but no promising scheme occurred to him. The best he could think of was to tell the man exactly how matters stood with him and how much he needed just such work.

It was a weary Lapidowitz who sat in Tompkins Square the following night. He waited nearly an hour, never taking his eyes from the door of the tenement-house across the street. Then he heard a cheerful voice greeting him and, turning, beheld his acquaintance approaching from the rear.

"I t'ought you nefer vould come," he exclaimed. "All der time I haf been vatching der house."

"Oh, I've been in there half a dozen times," said the stranger wearily. "I guess that fellow doesn't intend to pay the rent. I'll have to put him out, because I can't keep on coming down from the Bronx every day just for one rent. Well, would you like to collect them for

me? I've been inquiring about you, and they tell me you're pretty well known on the East Side, so I guess you're all right. But I'll have to have security just the same. Business is business, you know."

Lapidowitz told him that he had been unable to raise two hundred dollars, and the man's face fell.

"I done der best I could," said Lapidowitz eagerly. "But der best friends vot I got iss not in der city just now. Maybe if you let me try it—just vunce—den you von't need no segurity."

The man frowned and focused his one eye upon Lapidowitz. "How much could you raise?" he asked.

Lapidowitz produced the spoils of the previous evening. "T'oity-eight dollars is der best I could do," said he.

For several minutes the one-eyed man seemed to ponder over the matter, and then, "Well," said he, "I guess you meant well, and I'll give you a trial. But I can't let you collect all the rents. Here, let me have the money and I'll fix the thing up for you."

He drew from his pocket two sheets of paper, upon one of which he scribbled a few words.

"Here's a receipt that I had made out for your deposit. I had two hundred dollars in it, but I've changed it to thirty-eight. You see, you get interest at six per cent., because I'm only keeping the money as security, and I don't want to make any profit out of it. Now here's an order from me to all the tenants to pay the rent to you and a list of the names and the amount each one must pay. But I only want you to collect the first six rents next month. I'll have to come down here anyway, and I want to see how you get along. After that we will see what we will see!"

Lapidowitz's heart leaped with joy. "Mister," he said, "nefer vill you be sorry. I collect dem rents so fast you nefer vill haf to come down from der Bronnix. Vot iss der name uf der man vot hass not yet paid?"

The man mused a moment, then, "That's a good idea," he said. "You might start in with him. But don't go to-night. Wait until to-morrow morning, and then catch him before he leaves the house. His name is Rosenstein, and he lives on the top floor. And here is a card with my name and address. You can put the money in your bank and send me a check for it. Take off five per cent. for your commission, and

then I take off five per cent. for mine. Thank God, I won't have to come down here so often after this."

From the card Lapidowitz learned that the man's name was Thomas Jones. He shook Mr. Thomas Jones's hand with great ardour.

That night Lapidowitz went to bed a happy man. Once more he was free of the necessity of working. Upon twenty-five dollars a month he could live in the idleness that he craved until something better turned up. And when he thought of the widow Poliansky he actually grinned. She could jump off a dock before he would marry her.

Why dwell upon the awaking? Six times the owner of the tenement-house, who lived on the first floor, told Lapidowitz that there was no such person as Rosenstein in the house, that he collected his own rents, and that he had never seen a one-eyed man by the name of Jones. Those who live by their wits are slow to grasp the fact that they have been outwitted. Lapidowitz's mind had been bent so intently upon his own lazy ambition that he had never given a thought to the integrity of the one-eyed man.

He returned to the bench in Tompkins Square and went over every detail of his negotiations

with Mr. Thomas Jones. And when the truth dawned upon him he was too crestfallen even to feel keenly resentful. He went to the nearest police station and told his story.

"We'll see what we can do," said the officer at the desk, "but there isn't much hope. It's a new game, and I guess the chap doesn't belong around here. I'll bet he's an amateur and not a professional."

"A amateur?" repeated Lapidowitz incredulously. "He done it so good!"

With bowed head and dejected mien Lapidowitz walked slowly to the widow Poliansky's house. The worst had come to the worst. Before he could open his mouth she rushed toward him and laid her hands upon his shoulder.

"I told Mr. Semel," she cried, "I was going to give you a kiss as soon as I saw you. And he says he ain't jealous. So soon as you went away he comes to me and asks me why I was talking so much to you. And when I told him everything he said I had such a good heart he wants to marry me. So, dear Mr. Lapidowitz who brought me such happiness, you can have one kiss!"

But Lapidowitz, heedless of her pouting lips, turned and fled.

XII

Knight Takes Queen

THE Talmud lays great stress upon wisdom. Why this is so, I do not know—I have never been able to make out exactly what wisdom is. The life of a cow has always appealed to me as a perfectly rounded existence where all the qualities that pertain to the creature are developed to their fullest capacity. The cow fulfils its destiny beautifully, but inasmuch as the cow is never advanced as an example of wisdom it must be that a perfectly rounded existence and the fullest development of a creature's faculties do not constitute all that there is of wisdom. There must be something more.

I submit all this to the cogitation of any philosopher who cares to cogitate upon it. It is merely a reflection that comes to the mind apropos of the story of Solomon Kafka.

Solomon Kafka—or "Solly" Kafka, as every one called him—was a student of the Talmud

and, as such, was supposed by his parents and by all who were interested in his career to absorb endless wisdom from that wonderful work. A pious uncle had bequeathed his possessions to the Kafkas upon the condition that Solly become a rabbi. Solly would have liked to argue the matter with his uncle, but as his uncle was dead it was, of course, impossible to argue with him. Once Solly suggested that they get a lawyer to prove that his uncle was crazy when he made his will, but his parents would not hear of it. Nothing remained, therefore, but for Solly to buckle down to the study of the Torah and the Talmud, the cabala and other such fonts of wisdom.

It is undeniably a great thing to feel yourself growing wiser and wiser and to find that your former companions and even your parents look upon you with a feeling akin to awe. Even in the Ghetto a "student of divinity" is treated with more respect than a student of bricklaying, it being taken for granted that the student absorbs the dignity of his study. In a measure this attitude of his little world rather pleased Solly. He was far from being an ascetic; the warmth of friendship, the pleasure of companionship, indulgence in the good things of life,

all appealed to his nature. Yet the subtle flattery involved in the respectful attitude toward him of all his friends and acquaintances might have compensated for his feeling of aloofness and isolation, and Solly might gradually have developed into one of your real, austere, superior rabbis, if something had not happened.

Her name was Josephine Greenberg, and her eyes were brown, and she had the tiniest rosebud of a mouth and the most wonderful mass of shimmering hair that you ever saw. And when you gazed into her eyes you could see right through to her wonderful soul—at least Solly could—and you would have staked your life on the sweetness and the goodness and the spirituality of her nature. If you looked very long, however, her eyes, perhaps, would twinkle and a slight dimple appear in the middle of each cheek, and some doubts might arise in your mind about her spirituality. To Solly, however, she was perfection. When, after meeting her, Solly read in the Talmud, "If a man has knowledge, he has all things," Solly said things about the Talmud that would not have sounded nice at a rabbinical conference. Not that Solly underrated the value of knowledge; he merely despised the Talmud for underrating Josephine,

for he was sure that without Josephine he would have nothing and with her he would have all that he cared for in life.

It took but little time for Solly to meet Josephine, to fall in love with her, to ask her father for her hand, and to be informed that Mr. Greenberg would as soon think of jumping off a dock as to allow his daughter to marry a rabbinical student, or for that matter, a full-fledged rabbi.

It took somewhat longer to think this over and digest it; but after a week of thinking and digesting, Solly found that he had made no progress, and when, one night, he met Josephine at a ball and, in the shadow of a sideboard laden with refreshments, found an opportunity of conversing with her, he asked her if she would elope with him.

"No, Solly," she said. "Papa made me promise that I would not marry without his consent. I told him I loved you and that I would never marry any one else."

"But he had no right to ask you to make such a promise," said Solly. "And you have no right to keep it. I'm going to him now and tell him what I think."

But Josephine detained him. "Don't go to

him now. He's cranky. Do you play chess?"

"Chess?" said Solly. "No. What's that got to do with it?"

"Because papa's crazy about chess. He plays in the Orient Café on Second Avenue every afternoon and every night. He's awfully mad because mamma made him come to the ball with us. He wants to play chess. If you go to the café some afternoon and find him in a good humour, maybe you can have a talk with him."

Then Solly kissed her and told her she was an angel—and a smart angel at that. The next afternoon Solly found Greenberg in the Orient Café, studying a chess problem.

"Hello, Mr. Greenberg," he said. "Are you busy?"

Greenberg looked up. "Do you play chess?" he asked.

Solly shook his head.

"Yes, I'm busy," said Greenberg.

"I'd like to speak to you about Josephine," said Solly.

"When I'm busy," said Greenberg, "I talk about nothing. Maybe you'd better be spending your time studying your Talmud."

Solly, discomfited, withdrew to another table and rapped for a waiter. An old acquaintance

of his, Lapidowitz, the schnorrer, appeared before him with a napkin over his arm.

"Hello, Lapidowitz," exclaimed Solly. "What are you doing here?"

"I got a job. I'm a waiter," explained the schnorrer. "When I get a little money saved up I buy a place of my own. I'm only getting experience here. If you happen to have five—"

But Solly shook his head. "You never paid back the last five dollars I lent you. Never mind—don't explain. Bring me a cup of coffee."

When the coffee was set before him, Solly said to the schnorrer, "Do you play chess?"

Lapidowitz shook his head. "I know the moves," said he, "and play a little, but I ain't what you'd call a player."

"Do you know anybody here who does?" asked Solly. "I want to learn how to play it."

Lapidowitz surveyed the room. Along the wall sat half a dozen couples deeply and silently engrossed in the game.

"They could teach you, but they're all busy playing," he said. "Wait! Here's Rogofsky. Maybe he'll show you."

Lapidowitz approached a rather seedy-looking individual who had entered the café, and

whispered to him. The man inspected Solly critically and whispered in Lapidowitz's ear.

"He says," said Lapidowitz, approaching Solly, "he'll be glad to teach you chess if you treat him to three cups of coffee."

Solly accepted the offer, and a few moments later was receiving his first lesson in the royal and intricate game of chess.

"It is a game of brains," explained his instructor. This pleased Solly immensely, because he felt that the wisdom that he had imbibed from the Talmud would now come to his aid. He concentrated all his mental efforts upon the game. After an hour he felt thoroughly bewildered. He had not believed it possible that so small a number of pieces could move in so many different and complicated ways, and he wondered how any human being could remember it all, let alone see any rhyme or reason in the game. As soon as his instructor had finished his third cup of coffee he announced the lesson at an end. He advised Solly to buy a book on chess and practise by himself for a while.

"To-morrow, if you like," he said, "I will come here and have a cup of coffee with you."

Solly purchased a book and set of chessmen,

and sat up the greater part of the night studying the game. The next day he appeared at the Orient Café again, and took another lesson from Rogofsky, this time a long one during which he purchased four cups of coffee for his instructor. To his delight he now began to see order in the chaos of moves and rules, and some of the beauty of the game began to dawn upon him. That night he studied again, and the following day he approached Greenberg.

"Can't we have a little talk, Mr. Greenberg?" he asked. "You know how I feel about Josephine, and you know—"

"I know I'm busy trying to think out a problem and you are bothering me," replied Greenberg.

"I'll play you a game of chess!" said Solly abruptly.

Greenberg peered at him over the rim of his spectacles. "I thought you said you didn't play?"

"I've been learning," said Solly. "I'm interested in chess very much. After Josephine and I are married, you and I will often play chess."

Greenberg turned quite red, but said noth-

ing. Solly set up the pieces, and they began to play. From time to time Greenberg looked up from the chess-board and studied Solly's face while the latter was contemplating a move, but his own countenance was inscrutable. Within a dozen moves Solly had captured his adversary's queen, a rook, and a knight, and his spirits had begun to soar when, in the most sudden and unexpected fashion, he found himself mated. Without a word Greenberg picked up the periodical that he had been reading and resumed his study of a chess problem, while Solly, chagrined, went to another table and waited for his chess-instructor. As soon as Rogofsky entered the café Solly beckoned to him and asked him to have a cup of coffee.

"Listen," he said. "Did you ever play with Mr. Greenberg, over there?"

"Oh, sure. Lots of times," answered Rogofsky.

"Now suppose I make an arrangement with you. How long would it take you to teach me to play chess so that I could beat him?"

"Me?" asked Rogofsky, grinning. "About ten million years. He is the best player around here. He can give me a queen and beat me."

Solly turned and gazed at Greenberg with

renewed interest. It had already dawned upon him that the kind of brains required to play chess were not fed on the Talmud. It was the first time that he had ever admired Greenberg.

"Can't anybody beat him?" he asked.

"Oh, yes. Some of those crack players they've got at the Montefiore Chess Club. But it takes a professional to do it. He's too strong for the amateurs."

"Thanks," said Solly. Rogofsky toyed with his empty cup and looked pleadingly at Solly, but Solly rose and left the place. He was through with Rogofsky.

He spent half an hour walking the streets, thinking. What his thoughts were I do not know. From the smile upon his face that made passers-by look at him in amazement and wonder if he were out of his mind it is fair to judge that he was not thinking of the Talmud. There is nothing in the Talmud to smile about. He came to a sudden stop and burst out laughing. Then he hastened to the little café on upper Second Avenue where the Montefiore Chess Club met and asked one of the waiters,

"Who is the best player in the Montefiore Chess Club?"

"Mr. Nemirow, the gentleman with the grey beard sitting over there," was the answer.

Solly looked in the direction indicated, and saw an amiable-looking elderly man sipping a cup of coffee. There seems to be an affinity between chess and coffee, which I also submit to the cogitation of any one sufficiently interested in the matter to cogitate upon it.

"Is this Mr. Nemirow, the great chess-player?" asked Solly, in the most ingratiating tone he could assume.

The man looked up with a pleasant smile. "At your service," he said. "Do you wish to play a game?"

"Oh, Lord, no!" said Solly hastily. "I—I wanted to—do you happen to know Mr. Greenberg—Mr. Abraham Greenberg, the chess-player?"

Mr. Nemirow shook his head. "I'm sorry. I haven't the pleasure," he said.

"That's fine," said Solly, seating himself opposite the chess-player. "Now, Mr. Nemirow, I'm going to ask you to do me a great favour. You see—I—well, you were young yourself once, weren't you?"

Mr. Nemirow laid down the spoon that he had been toying with, folded his arms across

his breast, and gazed upon Solly with great interest. "Yes," he said, smiling, "you are perfectly right. I was born young."

Then they both laughed, and there was something in Solly's laugh that made Mr. Nemirow lean forward and say:

"If I can do anything for you it would really please me. What is on your mind?"

Solly, as rapidly as he could, told all about himself, told the story of how he had met Josephine and how obdurate her father was in his opposition to their marriage. He then described his efforts to learn the game of chess.

"You see," he went on, "I thought if I could learn to be a good player I'd say to him in an offhand way: 'Mr. Greenberg, I'll tell you what I'll do. We'll play a game of chess, and if I win you'll let me marry Josephine, and we'll say no more about it. But if you win I'll go out to Chicago and finish my studies out there, and I'll never ask you again.' You see, he beat me the first game I played with him, and I know he'd feel so sure of beating me again that he would be willing to get rid of me in such an easy way. But they say he's a terribly strong player, and I know I couldn't beat him if I tried a thousand years. So I want to get

some one to help me out. If—if I could get a really first-class player to come and sit in a corner of the café and tell me what moves to make, Mr. Greenberg wouldn't know anything about it and I could win the game. He never would suspect anything, and in the afternoon there's hardly anybody in the place, so that nobody else would notice anything. I know just how to arrange it. There's a waiter there who's a friend of mine, and he could carry the moves back and forth. And—and—"

Here Solly paused for the simple reason that he had nothing further to say, and gazed eagerly at the face of Mr. Nemirow. The chess-player seemed to be trying to swallow something.

"You are studying to be a rabbi?" he finally said. Solly grinned, and the next moment Mr. Nemirow burst into a roar of laughter that seemed to fill the entire room. "Ha! Ha! Ha!" he cried. "That's the richest thing I ever heard of in all my life. And from a rabbinical student! Ha! Ha! I don't think I'll ever get over it! And after you've bamboozled the old man you'll marry his daughter. Ho! Ho! Ho! That's rich!"

He paused to wipe the tears from his eyes.

"Well, my son," he said, "if you're looking for a chess-player who's foolish and criminal enough to go into such a scheme you've found him. I'd do it if I went to prison for it, if only for the joke." And he went off into another spasm of laughter.

During the long chat that followed, Solly and Mr. Nemirow became well acquainted with each other. There was something engaging in the younger man's frankness that appealed to the chess-player.

"To tell you the truth," Solly explained, "I haven't the faintest idea of being a rabbi. All that my uncle said in his will was that I should study for it and become a rabbi. After I've studied for it and have been a rabbi for half an hour I get the money he left, and then I'm going into business. But if I tell that to my mother now she'd make an awful fuss. I wanted to explain it all to Mr. Greenberg, but he never would give me a chance. I guess he thinks I'm an awful fool."

Mr. Nemirow even went so far as to play a game of chess with Solly, but after a few moves said:

"I guess you're right. You'll never make a chess-player. You have brains enough, but it

takes a special kind of chess-brains to play chess."

Solly returned to the Orient Café and took Lapidowitz aside. He explained the situation to him without, however, telling him the reason for playing such a joke on Greenberg. It appealed strongly to Lapidowitz's sense of humour, and he agreed heartily to fulfil his part.

When Greenberg appeared at the café on the following day, there were but two customers in the place. One was Solly Kafka, sitting on the leather settee against the wall in Greenberg's favourite seat, and the other was a grey-bearded stranger sitting in another angle of the room, apparently deeply immersed in a book that he held in his hand.

Greenberg, annoyed at finding another in the seat that he had come to look upon as peculiarly his own, was looking around the room to find a comfortable place when Solly called to him,

"Won't you play a game of chess with me, Mr. Greenberg?"

"But you can't play," said Greenberg, approaching Solly's table, nevertheless. A good chess-player, you see, hates to play with a weaker opponent, but would rather play with

any opponent than not play at all. "You play like a—like a rabbi," he went on, seating himself opposite Solly.

"Mr. Greenberg," said Solly solemnly, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll play you one game of chess, and if you win I'm going out to Chicago, and I'll never ask you for Josephine again. But if you lose you will let us get married next week and say no more about it. That's fair, isn't it? I know you're a good player, but I've been thinking a lot about chess since we played, and I think you're going to lose."

Greenberg, who had been staring at Solly over the rim of his spectacles, now turned and looked around the room as if seeking a witness to Solly's sudden insanity. There was no one in sight, however, except Lapidowitz, the waiter. Then Greenberg stroked his chin and gazed at Solly.

"I think—" he began, and paused. Then a twinkle came into his eyes, and he smiled. "Come," he said, "I agree. I always thought you were a foolish young man. But if you win you can marry Josie. If not, I never want to see you again."

Lapidowitz, who had come close to the table,

overheard him and his mouth opened wide. He looked at Solly with the utmost admiration.

"So this was the object of the joke!" he thought. "The young man wants to marry Greenberg's daughter. Oh, ho! What a smart young man he must be!"

Lapidowitz admired smartness above all other human qualities. He brought a set of chess-men and helped to set them up. Then, when Greenberg had made a couple of moves, Lapidowitz stole around the angle of the wall and whispered to the grey-bearded stranger who appeared to be studying the contents of a book. The stranger laid down his book, revealing an opened pocket chess-board held between its pages, and wrote upon a slate,

"Kt to KB 3."

Lapidowitz took the slate and, sauntering toward the table at which Solly and Greenberg were playing, held it aloft. Solly looked up, saw it, and promptly made his move. Then Lapidowitz approached nearer to the table and waited for Greenberg to move. When Greenberg had moved, Lapidowitz went through the same performance. Greenberg was so absorbed

in the game that for a long time he did not take his eyes from the board. Then, turning suddenly, and beholding Lapidowitz, slate in hand, eagerly watching the game, he said to the waiter,

"Interested in chess?"

"Terribly!" answered Lapidowitz, unabashed. "I would rather see a good game of chess than eat."

The game rapidly developed a most interesting situation, and Greenberg, with his hand upon his chin, nodded a great many times, his eyes never leaving the board.

"You play a strong game, Solly," he said musingly. Solly's heart leaped with joy. Greenberg had never addressed him so intimately before. As far as the game was concerned he was all at sea. Like the third assistant deputy clerk in the prime minister's office he had a vague idea that the orders he was mechanically executing were, each one of them, part of some big scheme, but what that scheme was he had not the remotest idea.

The game had reached a critical point. Greenberg, after long deliberation, had made his move, and Lapidowitz had carried it around the angle of the room. This time the waiter

Lapidowitz held aloft his slate. Solly read: "The $5 I ast you for I need bad. Kant you slip it in my hand?"

was gone longer than usual, and Solly, who had not the faintest idea of how the game stood, began to worry. Supposing that, after all, Greenberg should win! He had pledged his word to go to Chicago and never ask for Josephine's hand again. The perspiration stood upon Solly's brow. And at that moment Lapidowitz reappeared and held aloft his slate, upon which, written in Lapidowitz's best English, Solly read:

The $5 I ast you for I need bad. Kant you slip it in my hand?

If the complete history of human thought is ever written I warrant that we will all be surprised to find how strongly the great majority of the race have, at various times, been tempted to commit murder. The temptation to commit this crime comes to most of us under a provocation which, to the rest of mankind, would appear slight, yet which, to us, considering the time and the place and the circumstances, is a greater provocation than any which the law would recognise with leniency. The consequences of this terrible crime did not occur to Solly Kafka at this moment. His mind was too fully occupied with methods of accomplishing it. He looked

at his opponent. Greenberg, apparently in a deep study, had taken his eyes from the chessboard and was gazing abstractedly at a picture of George Washington that hung on the wall over Solly's head.

"Excuse me a moment," said Solly, rising. "I have to telephone." And, to Lapidowitz, "Come with me, waiter, and show me where the telephone is."

Lapidowitz led the way around the angle of the room to the desk of the café As soon as they were out of sight of Greenberg, Solly seized Lapidowitz by the arm and led him into a rear room.

"This won't do," he said. "All my money is in silver, and Greenberg will hear it jingle. Where can we go so that nobody will hear a sound?"

Lapidowitz smiled. "Come with me," he whispered. He led Solly out into a hallway and down a flight of steps into the cellar of the building.

"This will do," said Solly. At one and the same time his right hand clutched the schnorrer by the throat and his left leg threw the schnorrer to the ground. Solly prefaced his remarks with a few very un-rabbinical words.

"Now," he said, "you'll swear on the Torah and the Talmud to carry out your promise and keep your mouth shut."

Lapidowitz, gasping for breath, swore.

"Hurry up and get that next move," said Solly, releasing him and running up the stairs. A few minutes later Lapidowitz stood behind Greenberg's back holding up a slate upon which Solly read:

Q to R4 only for to-nite I promist. To-morro I get evin.

Solly, with a sigh of relief, moved his queen to rook's fourth, and a few minutes later Greenberg arose.

"I give up," he said. "You play a fine game, Solly. Come around to-morrow night and see Josie. You are a citizen, ain't you?"

"Sure I am," said Solly, in surprise. "I was born here."

Greenberg pointed to the picture of George Washington and grinned. "He wasn't a rabbi," he said. "Just a good citizen. Good afternoon!"

The grey-bearded stranger who sat in the café seemed immersed in his book, and Lapido-

witz was waiting upon a new customer who had arrived. Solly left the place walking on air.

When he called upon Josie the following night, her father was not at home. Inasmuch as this is not a real love story there is no need of going into the details of what took place that evening excepting to remark that everything was ALL RIGHT. It was arranged that the wedding should take place five days later. When Solly returned to his home that night, he found a letter from Lapidowitz.

"I kept my promis," it ran, "and nobody can giv me a punch for nothing. Mister Greenberg is my friend and so long as I kno every-thing about you marrij and the gaim of ches I kno what is my dooty. I wont sine my name but you kno who is it."

If Solly Kafka had ever had any doubt as the rabbinate being his vocation it surely must have been dispelled at that moment. There was not a single one of the thousand schemes of punishment that he thought of inflicting upon Lapidowitz that the poorest rabbi would not have blushed at. But all these schemes Solly was forced to abandon, for they were impracticable, and the danger of his telling Greenberg the true story of the joke that had been played

upon him was exceedingly real and intensely practicable. For nearly two hours Solly revolved the situation in his mind. And then, with a sweet smile, he went to bed.

The next morning he called Lapidowitz on the telephone. "Listen," he said. "Never mind about that Greenberg business. I have a big scheme, and there's a chance for me to do something for you. I need some one to help me, and I want to give you the first chance. Ask your boss for a week off. Meet me at the Grand Central station to-night and bring a satchel with you. We're going to Chicago. What? Never mind about the money. I'll pay all your expenses. I'm in a hurry now. I've got to go to the bank."

As a matter of honest fact, Solly did go to the bank. And that night he met Lapidowitz at the station, purchased two tickets and they left on the train for Chicago. They dined on the train. The story that Solly told Lapidowitz I am actually ashamed to repeat, but Lapidowitz swallowed every word of it. He retired to his berth that night a happy man, and dreamed wonderful dreams. The next morning the porter handed him a letter.

"Dear friend Lapidowitz," it began. "I had

to get off at Rochester unexpectedly. As soon as you get to Chicago go to Meyer's Kosher Hotel and tell Mr. Meyer who you are. I telegraphed him to take care of you. Don't ask him for any money. I'll either come out or telegraph you in three or four days. Don't worry. Our scheme is all right. Your old friend, Solly."

It was a quiet wedding, and the mother of the bride and the mother of the groom cried to their hearts' content. While the rabbi was congratulating the bride, her father took Solly into an adjoining room.

"How soon are you going into business?" he asked.

"As soon as I am a rabbi," said Solly, grinning.

Greenberg smiled and nodded. "I thought so," he said. "I knew you were too smart to be a rabbi. What do you suppose is the matter with that fellow Lapidowitz?" And he handed Solly a telegram:

Stop wedding till I get back Solly cheeted in ches somebody else plade game will tel everything telegraph railroade fare. Lapidowitz.

Solly bit his lip. "He must be crazy," he said. "Anyway, it's too late to stop the wedding." He looked at Greenberg defiantly.

Greenberg smiled and peered at him over the edge of his spectacles. "Sure it is," he said. "You don't think I'd stop a wedding for Lapidowitz, anyway, do you?"

Solly gazed at him expectantly. There was something in Greenberg's tone that made him uneasy.

"You wouldn't believe Lapidowitz anyway, would you?" he asked.

"Oh, dear, no. But before you go on your honeymoon, Solly, I wish you would do me one favour."

"Anything in the world. Another game of chess?" And Solly grinned.

Greenberg frowned. "Not with you, but your friend who played that game."

Solly's mouth opened wide and, for a moment, he had the sensation that is said to accompany lockjaw. "Did Lapidowitz—" he began, but his father-in-law smiled.

"Next time you try to be so smart don't have the other man looking at a picture of George Washington which is just the same as a look-

ing-glass. I saw that schnorrer hold up the slate and read the next move even before you did. My! That fellow is a fine player!"

"But how—why—" Solly's voice tapered off into an indistinct gurgle.

"Why I didn't say anything? You dear boy! Any man what is smart enough for such a trick is too smart to be a rabbi."

XIII

Klein's Financial System

IF you delve long enough into the literature of ancient Greece you will probably come across this proverb,

"When a woman dominates a man, the gods laugh!"

I merely remember reading this quotation somewhere, and deeply regret that I cannot place it more accurately. If it is not in Grecian literature it may be in Persian literature or Aramaic or Swedish. I am quite sure that it is not in the Talmud, because most of the authors of the Talmud were married men. In these days of feminine unrest this quotation might, possibly, present interesting thoughts for discussion as, for instance. Who cares whether the gods laugh or not? Besides which, as every one knows, the relation of the sexes has undergone a complete change. The old idea of man being the dominant, masterful creature and woman being selected by him to ad-

minister to his pleasure and comfort has been so thoroughly exploded that you could hardly find a fragment of it. The New Thought, the Suffrage Movement, the Bull Moose platform, and the Zeitgeist have had a tremendous effect upon the laws of nature, and the old order of things has been changed.

I would like exceedingly to dwell upon this theme and, if possible, convert those who still believe in the old-fashioned order of the universe, but the limits of this story do not offer much latitude for speculative philosophy, and the reader will have to philosophise for himself. Here, however, is a story that may throw some light upon the matter:

Our hero's name is Gottlieb Klein. He was a garment-cutter employed by Shiras on Rivington Street, and he received eighteen dollars each week for his services. This, you must remember, was in the old days, before they had unions and when the cost of living was not quite so high as it is to-day. Gottlieb Klein was married. By being married, I mean that he had once stood before a rabbi with a woman at his side and had promised to take the woman to wife for better or for worse. From that

moment his responsibility in the matter ended, and Mrs. Gottlieb Klein took charge of the situation. Whether the gods laughed or not, the utmost credit must be given to Mrs. Klein for the skill with which she managed the affair. During the time that Klein worked each day he was his own master—to the extent, at least, of regulating his own mind.

This, of course, did not include the luncheon-hour in the middle of the day, because Mrs. Klein always brought her husband his lunch and sat with him in the shop while he ate it. But at all other times his conduct was carefully regulated by his wife. She told him what shirt to wear, what to read, what people to invite to their home, and what people to avoid. It never occurred to Klein to resist. In addition to his inherent timidity, which made him dread an explosion of his wife's temper as most men dread having their left leg cut off, he possessed a very amiable disposition and was as eager to submit to his wife of his own volition as through fear of her forcefulness. All of which, you see, made it an ideal union.

The fundamental law of the household was that Klein must bring his wife his weekly wages

as soon as he received them. In addition to being queen of the realm, Mrs. Klein was chancellor of the exchequer.

As they lived only a few blocks from the factory in which Klein worked he had no need of car-fare. And as his wife brought his noonday meal, and purchased all his clothes and managed all the affairs of the household and did not permit her husband to drink or smoke, it would have been exceedingly difficult for Klein to devise an excuse for withholding one cent of his wages. He actually had no use for money. This, by the way, is an argument in favour of the New Thought that never occurred to me before.

The existence of the Kleins had been running along serenely in this channel for ten years when Gottlieb Klein took one step from the beaten path of his life. Other men have occasionally deviated from the sensible routine of life and have escaped all consequences save, perhaps, a twinge of remorse. The consequences of Klein's misstep, however, were so appalling that I hope all men who read this will take the lesson to heart and shun, forever, the primrose path.

A consignment of cloth which had been ex-

pected failed to arrive on time, and at four o'clock on a Friday afternoon Shiras's cutters found themselves idle. Being in good humour that day, Shiras paid the men and let them go, saying, with a smile,

"I give you the next three hours for a present."

It was the first time in years that Klein had found himself free for three hours, and he had not the faintest idea what to do. Instinctively he started to walk home. Mandelbaum, a fellow cutter, walked with him a few blocks and then suggested that they go to a coffee-house for a cup of coffee and a cake. Klein hesitated, whereat Mandelbaum said good-naturedly:

"Nu, only ten cents! What does it matter? I will treat."

There were many people in the coffee-house whom Klein knew, and the atmosphere of the place filled him with a pleasurable excitement that he had not experienced in many a day. They seated themselves at a table where a number of men were playing with dice. Klein watched the game with interest—the stakes were rather high—and was fascinated to see one of the players—a stout, black-bearded chap

—winning at every throw. Mandelbaum nudged him and whispered,

"He's winning now, but I'll bet his luck will change and he'll lose."

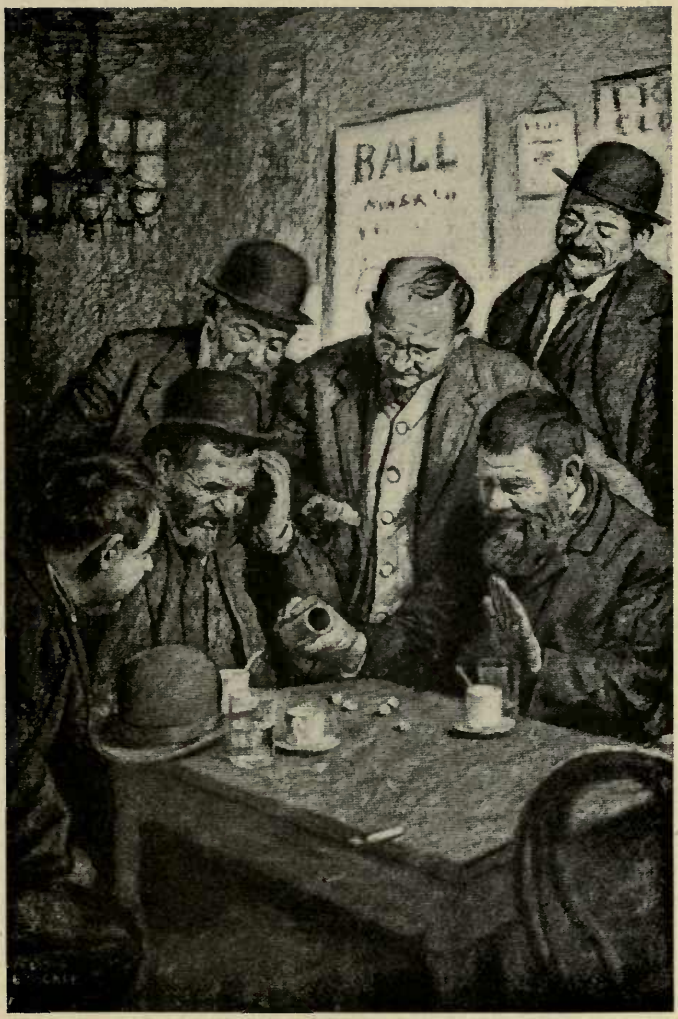
Surely enough, the tide of fortune soon began to turn, and one by one the other players recouped their losses and began to win. But with the exception of the black-bearded man the players were not very courageous, for, as soon as each had won a few dollars, he ceased playing. The game seemed almost at an end. Blackbeard was now the only loser, and, one after another, he asked them if they would not throw once more.

"I'll throw anybody for ten dollars!" he said. "Just one throw out of the box."

"I'll throw!" cried Mandelbaum eagerly. The man handed him the dice-box, and Mandelbaum threw. He was trembling with excitement, and Klein, looking over his shoulder and marvelling at his friend's recklessness, was hardly less excited. Mandelbaum threw four aces. His opponent, without a word, threw a pair of sixes, smiled pleasantly, and handed Mandelbaum ten dollars.

"Once more?" he asked.

Mandelbaum shook his head. "You try it!"



It was a pair of twos. "That looks easy," said his opponent, and calmly threw a pair of threes

he whispered eagerly, to Klein. "His luck has changed, and he's sure to lose."

The man heard it and turned to Klein with a smile. "Come on!" he said. "I'm a good sport. Win or lose is all the same to me." He held out the dice-box to Klein. "Just one throw for ten dollars!" he said coaxingly.

Whether the coffee had gone to Klein's head, whether the sight of money changing hands so rapidly had intoxicated him, whether it was the thought of easy gain that bewildered his senses, or whether it was merely a sudden awakening of the gambling instinct which lies hidden somewhere in every man's nature, are questions that I doubt if Socrates himself could positively answer. I only know that Gottlieb Klein took the box in his trembling hand and, without uttering a word, threw the dice upon the table. And then he stared at what he had thrown, and a cold sweat suddenly broke out upon his forehead. It was a pair of twos.

"That looks easy!" said his opponent, and calmly threw a pair of threes.

"Too bad!" exclaimed Mandelbaum.

"Try again?" asked the winner.

It was about fifteen minutes past four on that Friday afternoon that it all happened. Two

hours later Gottlieb Klein recovered consciousness and found that he was walking the streets without any definite destination in mind. His memory of what had happened since he left the shop was a blinding chaos that, somehow or other, seemed full of fireworks. He remembered distinctly handing a man ten dollars of his wages: all else was confused. It was the sudden recollection that the ten dollars must be replaced that brought him down to earth again. And then Gottlieb Klein heaved a long, long sigh.

"Oy! Oy! Oy!" he moaned. "Oy! Oy! Oy!"

"Oy" doesn't mean anything in particular, and yet it expressed his feelings more accurately than all the vocabulary of Dante's Inferno. The thought of telling his wife about it never for an instant occurred to him. That idea was so entirely and hopelessly out of the question that unless some one had suggested it to him, it would not have come to his mind had he deliberated over the matter for a year. He suddenly found himself in front of the grocer's store where his wife purchased the family vegetables. Horowitz, the grocer himself, stood in the doorway, smiling cheerfully.

"Horowitz," he said—and no man ever went to his death more heroically—"lend me ten dollars, will you? I'll give it back in a few days."

"Sure!" said Horowitz.

A few minutes after seven o'clock—the usual time of his home-coming—Klein handed his wife eighteen dollars.

"What's the matter?" she asked. "You ain't looking well."

It was Klein's last chance to make a clean breast of the whole affair without entering upon the path of deception.

"I—I have a headache!" he replied—and the last chance was gone. In the synagogue next day, his mind could not follow the service: it was too much engrossed with the greatest problem that had ever confronted it. How was he going to repay those ten dollars? To take the money out of his salary was impossible, as his wife would know of it. To earn ten dollars outside the sphere of his regular work was out of the question: he would not have known how to begin. Klein sighed. Klein sighed a great many times that day and the next and the next, for the longer he pondered over his situation the more cause did he find for sighing. On the fourth day Horowitz, the grocer, gazed at him

with that expression that borrowers frequently see—or fancy they see—on the faces of those to whom they owe money.

"I'll see you to-morrow," said Klein, in as blithe a tone as he could command. The next morning he went to Sammis, the butcher, and with the air of being in a tremendous hurry said, "Can you let me have ten dollars for a few days?"

"Sure!" said Sammis. You see, Klein's reputation was good in that neighbourhood, and, having never borrowed money before, he had no difficulty in obtaining so small a loan. Besides which, the relation of Gottlieb Klein to his own household was well known, and, curious as the fact may be, husbands who are dominated by their wives have better credit than their more assertive brethren. With the ten dollars that Klein borrowed from Peter he paid Paul. Of course he knew full well that this transaction, instead of solving his difficulty, only prolonged it; but, remembering the expression of the grocer's face, even a postponement of the fatal hour of reckoning was welcome. For three days Klein worried over the matter, this time with Sammis, the butcher, as the central figure of his thoughts, instead of Horowitz.

Then, when he came home after his day's work his wife told him that Sammis had called to see him.

"What did he want?" asked Klein faintly. He was sure that his heart had stopped beating.

"He didn't say. He said it wasn't important."

"I—I think I'll go to see him after supper," said Klein. As soon as he had finished supper Klein hastened to Aarons, the shoemaker, who lived a few doors away.

"Aarons," said he, "can you lend me ten dollars for a few days?"

"Sure!" said Aarons. Klein thanked him and called upon Sammis.

"I was coming to pay you to-night, anyway," he said. "Why did you come to my house?"

"I'm awfully sorry, Klein," replied the butcher, "but a man came with a bill that I had to pay, and I was a little short. It's all right, now. I'm in no hurry for the money."

But Klein insisted upon paying him, and then took up his burden of worry again, this time with Aarons, the shoemaker, as the central figure.

Strangely enough this load of worry seemed

to be growing lighter. The fear of discovery by his wife was not so immediate now, and while the thought of the ten dollars that he owed harassed him day and night, it had not the same depressing effect upon his spirits as the dread of explaining the matter to Mrs. Klein. Still, it was bad enough.

When the time came to pay Aarons, Klein borrowed ten dollars of Lazarus, the pedlar, who had a route on Long Island and was home only on Fridays and Saturdays. From Lubarsky, the coal-dealer, he borrowed to pay Lazarus. From Rabbi Roloff he borrowed to pay Lubarsky. And then, one fateful day, having received a note from the rabbi asking him when it would be convenient for him to repay the ten dollars, as the rabbi had to pay his rent—and finding himself utterly unable to think of another soul whom he knew well enough to ask for a loan—he returned to Horowitz, the grocer, of whom he had borrowed first and who, remembering how promptly Klein had repaid the money before, lent it without the slightest hesitation. Klein thus completed an endless chain of Peters and Pauls of each of whom he could borrow, in turn, to pay the other. And for

seven months he borrowed and paid, borrowed and paid and borrowed again.

As a system of finance this has, of course, much to recommend it. Conducted upon a higher plane, it might even lead a man to wealth and enable him, had he financial genius, to manipulate great enterprises. If you borrow and pay back promptly, it is the easiest thing in the world to borrow again. The drawback, however, is that occasionally you Strike a Snag or miss a Cog.

For seven months, as I said, Gottlieb Klein borrowed and paid in the same circle. During all this time the thought of ten dollars was never absent from his mind. All day long, as he worked, he kept thinking of ten dollars and worrying lest he might forget the proper rotation of his creditors. Every night he dreamed of ten dollars.

In his dreams, curiously enough, he was happiest, for he always found a ten-dollar bill in some unexpected place, or strangers stopped him in the street and gave him ten dollars. But when he awoke, his problem was ever the same. And it might have been the same to this day—for, in this system, time plays no part—if

it had not been for a most annoying and disconcerting circumstance.

Some philosopher—I think it was Praxiteles of Milo, whoever he was—said once that bad luck usually runs in a streak and lasts about seven months, after which it gets worse. Gottlieb Klein's system worked to perfection for seven months, and then Slipped a Cog. It was Aarons's turn to lend him ten dollars, and Aarons had gone to his cousin's wedding and would not be home for two days. And Lazarus, the pedlar, who was next on the list, was covering his Long Island route and would not return for five days. It was with considerable misgiving that Klein went to the office of Lubarsky, the coal-dealer, for it was less than two weeks ago that he had repaid him in his turn. But Lubarsky had gone to Philadelphia, and no one in his office knew when he would return. Next on the list came Rabbi Roloff, and as it seemed to Klein only yesterday that he had paid the rabbi, he had not the heart to call upon him again so soon.

And as Horowitz, the grocer, who immediately followed the rabbi in Klein's order of rotation, was only one removed from Sammis, who was now due to be repaid, Horowitz real-

ised that his system had Struck a Snag, and his heart sank very low. He could think of no one else. He feared he had come to the end of his rope, and the face of his wife rose, spectre-like, before his mind's eye. He felt a chill creep up and down his spine. And at this propitious—or, perhaps, unpropitious—moment, he came face to face with Lapidowitz, the schnorrer.

"Hello, Klein!" cried the schnorrer cheerily. "What makes you look so glum?"

"Lapidowitz," said Klein earnestly, "I need ten dollars for a few days. Have you got ten dollars?"

Lapidowitz peered at him intently, and then, drawing a roll of bills from his pocket, began to count them. "Yes," he said, returning the money to his pocket. "I got just ten dollars, but I need them."

"Listen, old man," said Klein eagerly. "If you only knew—I—I—be a good fellow and lend them to me. You'll get them back in four days."

Lapidowitz reflected long and intently. "Klein," he said finally, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I don't exactly need the money until four days from now, but then I'll need eleven dol-

lars. If you promise to give me a dollar for interest, I'll lend you the money. You know I wouldn't ask it if I didn't need the money."

Klein gasped, stared at Lapidowitz, sputtered, and almost choked. And then, in the calm tone of desperation, he said: "All right. I'll give you back eleven dollars."

"In four days?" asked the schnorrer.

"In four days."

"Swear it on the Torah!"

Klein swore it on the Torah. Fifteen minutes later he had repaid Sammis. Half an hour later, pretending that he was not well, he went to bed and lay there trying to figure out what had become of his system and what he was to do now. Instead of borrowing ten dollars he would now have to borrow eleven, because to obtain the extra dollar from any outside source was as impossible as to raise the ten dollars. And if he took Lapidowitz into his circle of creditors he saw clearly that his indebtedness would amount to one dollar each time he came to the schnorrer. He knew Lapidowitz well, and knew that it was no urgent need of eleven dollars that had exacted that usurious interest.

And Gottlieb Klein's mind worked and strug-

gled over that problem as it had never exerted itself before. And then, suddenly, a cry burst from his lips.

"What is it?" asked his wife, running into the room.

Klein hid his face under the coverlet. "I just had a pain, but it went away!" he mumbled. But there was a smile upon his face.

The following night he came home with the air of a man brimming over with news of importance. "What do you think!" he cried. "We have organised a Yiddish Garment Cutters' Club! I'm the president. All it costs is a dollar a week, and if anything happens to me I get a benefit."

"A benefit?" said his wife. "What kind of a benefit?"

"It—it—the club pays the doctor's bills and the medicine and—and as soon as we have enough money in the treasury we get paid while we're sick."

Mrs. Klein had heard something of benefit societies before and, in a general way, approved of them. What she did not approve of, however, was the idea of her husband taking a step of such importance without consulting her. She told him so. It took her five minutes to

tell him, and at the end of the five minutes Klein knew positively and completely that she did not approve.

"It was Mandelbaum's idea," he explained lamely. "I had to join right away, or else they wouldn't take me in. Mandelbaum said, 'Now or never,' if I wanted to join. I didn't think you would object."

"I have my opinion of Mandelbaum!" said his wife. "How long do you have to pay a dollar a week?

"Oh, not long," Klein answered hastily. "Only about eleven or twelve weeks. I don't have to pay as long as the others because I'm president!"

When lovely woman stoops to matters of business, she either makes a great success of them or a muddle—there is rarely a middle course.

Fortunately for Klein, his wife could not exactly weigh the merits of this benefit society, and, having given her husband a piece of her mind upon the subject, she agreed, reluctantly, that he was to retain a dollar a week out of his wages in order to pay his dues in this new organisation.

Have you ever heard the refrain of that popular song,

"Who took that in-jine off my neck?"

It expresses—somewhat inadequately, to be sure—the feelings of Gottlieb Klein when he saw his way out of his difficulty. At the end of four days Aarons, the shoemaker, had returned, and Klein borrowed ten dollars from him. Adding to this the dollar he had retained from his wages, he repaid Lapidowitz. And when, on the following Friday night, he learned that Lazarus had returned from his Long Island route, he approached him with a dollar in his hand.

"Lazarus, old man," he said. "I'd like to borrow nine dollars if you can spare it."

Lazarus handed him a ten-dollar bill. "You can have ten," he said. "I have no change."

"Take this dollar!" cried Klein eagerly. "Nine is all I need."

When it came time to pay Lazarus he borrowed eight dollars from Lubarsky. And thus, you can readily see, he would have been free of all his troubles and entirely out of debt in exactly eight more weeks if, once again, the system had not Slipped a Cog. That, you must always remember, is a habit that all human systems have. Not that they always Slip a Cog, for then they would not be systems. They only

Slip the Cog often enough to prove how worthless they are.

Mandelbaum had worked overtime the day before and came to the shop late on the following morning. His table was next to Klein's. "Say, Klein," he began, "what's this business about the benefit club?"

Klein began to perspire, and it seemed to him as if all the lights in the world had suddenly gone out. "Wh-what are you talking about?" he asked.

"I just met your wife on the street, and she said I was a fool for getting up a benefit club."

Klein felt his heart rising toward his larynx. "What did you tell her?" he asked faintly.

"I told her I never started any benefit club and that I didn't know what she was talking about. My, but she looked mad! What's it all about?"

Klein laid his hand upon Mandelbaum's arm. "Swear on the Torah you'll never tell a soul about it, and I'll tell you everything. She'll be here at lunch-time, and I don't know what to do."

Mandelbaum swore he would never reveal a word of the other's confidence, and Klein told

his story. It did him good to tell it, too, for now that he had to face his wife he felt that his burden was too great to bear. Long before he had finished his recital Mandelbaum's countenance was overspread with a huge grin.

"You needn't laugh," said Klein. "It was all your fault in the beginning. You told me to play dice with that man or I would never have done it."

"That's so," said Mandelbaum, gravely. "Let me think. Maybe there is a way out of it."

For a long time the two men chalked patterns on cloth and cut the cloth in silence. Then Mandelbaum turned to his companion with a wink and a grin.

"Klein," he whispered, "I have it!"

"What shall I do?" Klein whispered in turn.

"Don't do anything!" said Mandelbaum. "Leave it all to me. I got to do a lot of thinking, but when she comes you leave everything to me. I promise you it will all come out right. How much do you owe now?"

"Eight dollars," whispered Klein.

"H'm! I guess it's all right. Sh-h-h! Here she comes!"

Klein turned, astounded, and beheld his wife

enter the workroom. "Wh-what brings you so early?" he asked. He felt those old, familiar chills coursing tremulously up and down the marrow of his spine.

"Come outside," said his wife. "I want to talk with you!"

"Oh, Mrs. Klein," said Mandelbaum cheerily, "you're just the person I want to see!" And he accompanied Klein out into the hallway.

Mrs. Klein glared at him. "Well?" she asked, in an icy voice. "What do *you* want?"

"Mrs. Klein," said Mandelbaum solemnly, "I just had a talk with the other members of the club, and we fined your husband nine dollars because he talks too much. A secret club is a secret club, and no member has a right to tell even his wife about it. When you asked me about the club, I told you I didn't know anything about it. I thought maybe you just learned it by accident. But your husband confessed that he told you, and the rules say that any member who tells about the club is fined nine dollars. And if he don't pay right away we must put up his name, and he has to pay a dollar more each week."

Klein, with tears in his eyes—and they were

genuine tears, too—turned to his wife. "Oh, how could you!" he exclaimed mournfully.

His wife gazed at him in astonishment. "You never said it was a secret!" she declared.

"I—I never thought you'd tell anybody," he retorted. "See what I get for it. No other member told his wife. Only me. And I'm fined eight dollars."

"Nine!" corrected Mandelbaum.

Klein looked at him. "I thought it was eight," he said, in surprise.

But Mandelbaum shook his head. "Nine," he said. "And, besides, you got to go to the secret meeting to-night and give an explanation. If you don't"—he shook his head ominously—"you know the secret rules!"

Klein looked at him in bewilderment. Then he turned to his wife. "I must have the nine dollars!"

Mrs. Klein, with lips pressed firmly together, opened her reticule, drew out a pocket-book, and began to count out nine one-dollar bills. Even in the new order of things, you see, there are times when a woman feels that speech is helpless. The fact that she dominates the household is a secret that she desires to keep to herself. Mrs. Klein reluctantly handed her husband the

money, which he, in turn, handed to Mandelbaum.

"Did you want to see me about anything special?" Klein then asked his wife.

"No!" she said. And without another word she departed.

"What did you make it nine dollars for?" asked Klein immediately. "I only owe eight."

Mandelbaum winked at him. "You and I will hold the secret meeting at the coffee-house to-night, and the dollar will come in handy."

XIV

Bimberg's Night Off

"THE egg of to-day," saith the Talmud, "is better than the hen of to-morrow." Right-o! A shipwrecked traveller clinging to a raft in mid-ocean imagines he has reached the zenith of his happiness when a liner appears upon the scene, lowers a lifeboat, and picks him up. But after his clothes are dried and he has eaten a few meals he wishes he had a cabin de luxe on the promenade deck and a seat at the captain's table. In proof of all of which "list, list, oh, list!" to this experience of Lapidowitz.

Lapidowitz had taken up the drama. Some one had told him of the fabulous sums that playwrights make, and Lapidowitz, after witnessing a performance of the "Rose of Sharon" at the Yiddish Theatre had written a play. He wrote it in Milken's café, and having explained to Milken how much money he expected to get for it, and having allowed him to read the manuscript page by page as he wrote it, had no

trouble in getting his meals on credit. It took him three days to finish the play. It was a tragedy with enough comedy, burlesque, and melodrama thrown in to give it variety.

Milken admired it immensely. The title of it was "A Son of the Talmud," but Lapidowitz decided that he would not object if the manager of the Yiddish Theatre changed this title to something better.

As a matter of fact, Lapidowitz did not care what the stage-manager did with the play. He had no pride of authorship and no sensitive feelings of any kind that could possibly be hurt. Lapidowitz simply needed money, and unless he could raise money he knew he would have to go to work. He had come to the end of his resources. All his friends refused to lend him any more money, his credit was exhausted everywhere except in Milken's café, and his silk hat was becoming frowzy. The ordinary misfortunes attendant upon laziness and poverty Lapidowitz could bear with equanimity. He had been accustomed to them for years, and he had not yet lost faith in the guiding maxim of his life: "If no one will lend you money for dinner some one is sure to lend you money for supper." But a frowzy silk hat grated upon

his sensibilities. Hence, "A Son of the Talmud."

The manager of the Yiddish Theatre took the manuscript and began to read it. Lapidowitz sat watching his face as he read. At first the manager read the lines carefully, without skipping a word.

"You can change the title," said Lapidowitz. "Maybe you will think of something more catchy for the public than 'A Son of the Talmud.'"

The manager did not answer, but began to read every third or fourth line.

"If you want to leave out any part I haven't any objection," ventured Lapidowitz, hopefully watching the manager's face.

The manager now began to skip pages, glancing casually over every fourth or fifth.

"Maybe there are things you want me to write over again," suggested Lapidowitz.

The manager yawned and handed him back his manuscript.

"You couldn't use it?" asked Lapidowitz.

"Not if you paid me ten thousand dollars," replied the manager. He gazed at Lapidowitz studiously for a minute. "Say, my friend," he said, "I haven't got time to bother with you

very much. But if you're looking for work I've got a job for you. I need a doorkeeper at the stage entrance. The man who had the job is sick. Do you want it or not? Hurry up!"

Lapidowitz drew a long breath. "I take it!" he said. And that is how Lapidowitz became an employé of the Yiddish Theatre. The first night he attended to his duties faithfully. The second night he found it tiresome sitting in the dark corridor all alone, and thought he would take a peep at the performance from the wings. The stage-manager grasped him firmly by the ear.

"If you leave the door again," he hissed at him, "I'll kick you out of the theatre."

Lapidowitz resumed his post at the door, and whiled away the time by cursing the stage-manager. Here, as the old authors used to say, let us leave our hero for a moment while we conduct our readers to another scene.

It was in a restaurant on Grand Street. Bimberg, the drygoods man, sat at a table with half a dozen of his friends drinking Somorodnyi and explaining, over and over again, how it happened that he had a night off. Bimberg's friends always spoke to him in Yiddish, but

Bimberg, for some inscrutable reason, spoke nothing but what he called English.

"Der vife," he said, "goes to Brooklyn because her mamma iss sick unt says I should stay home. Unt den she telephones dot she got to stay all night mit mamma, unt dot I should go to bed. So I gif Rachel, der cook, fifty cents so dot she don't say not'ing. Unt here I am! Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Bimberg was well known upon the East Side, and as no one had ever before seen him in a restaurant without his wife, and as a great many of his acquaintances happened to pass his table that night, he had an opportunity of repeating this explanation at least twenty times.

Somorodnyi is a mild Hungarian wine with a flavour something like that of sherry, but Bimberg was not accustomed to drinking anything stronger than coffee, and it required only two small glasses to fill him with pleasurable excitement. Then some one suggested the Yiddish Theatre, and Bimberg enthusiastically seconded the suggestion.

Here, let us again digress for half a second. Why is it that when a group of people are feeling in fine spirits after dinner the suggestion of the theatre always appeals to them? Those

who are depressed or in a thoughtful or sombre mood or worried or wrapped up in the contemplation of their own affairs, and who, one would be tempted to think, would be most benefited by the relaxation of witnessing an interesting play, are, as a rule, least prone to flee from their troubles and seek solace in the theatre. While, upon the other hand, I have yet to find a group of people in that delightful frame of mind in which they feel uplifted and amused and perfectly happy in the interchange of thought and badinage by whom the suggestion of going to a theatre is not greeted with spontaneous enthusiasm!

Be this as it may, Bimberg and his friends went to the theatre. Rosa Lazarus was playing the leading part in the "Rose of Sharon," and Bimberg could not take his eyes off her. He was not accustomed to the theatre, and the lofty lines that she spoke seemed to him a natural part of her character, harmonising as they did with the beauty of her face and figure.

"How I would like to sit down and talk with a woman like that!" he exclaimed.

"Why not?" responded one of his friends. "It is the custom. All you have to do if you like an actress is to go to the stage door and

send her a note saying you would like to make her acquaintance. I have often read about it in the newspapers."

The suggestion appealed to Bimberg. He wrote upon a slip of paper:

"Charming Lady, I cannot tell you how much your noble character appeals to me. I would like to become acquainted with you. My name is Bimberg, the drygoods man. Please send me an answer."

At the end of the act he went around to the stage door and handed the note to the doorkeeper. It was somewhat dark, and in the tall figure that received his note he failed to recognise Lapidowitz, the well-known schnorrer, although Lapidowitz instantly recognised him.

"Hello, Mr. Bimberg!" exclaimed Lapidowitz. "Just wait a minute, and I'll give the note to Miss Lazarus."

At that instant something within Bimberg seemed to stir and awaken, and he experienced the sinking sensation of a man who realises that he has committed a blunder. He wanted to recall the note, but the doorkeeper was already out of sight. As a matter of fact, Lapidowitz had turned around an angle of the corridor and

was holding the note under a gas jet. As he read it he chuckled.

"If Mrs. Bimberg knew!" he exclaimed. He pocketed the note and returned to the actress's admirer.

"Miss Lazarus is married, Mr. Bimberg," he said. "Her name off the stage is Mrs. Lazinsky. Lazarus is only her stage name. Her husband is in the company, and she says she hasn't time to meet anybody."

Bimberg did not even rejoin his friends. He hurried home, got into bed, and crawled as far under the covers as he could. Lapidowitz, meanwhile, read the note over and over again, laughing at first and then plunged in deep thought. With a final sigh of satisfaction he put the note in his pocket and lit a cigarette.

"Maybe yes," he said, "and maybe no. But I guess yes."

The following morning Bimberg sat in his inner office busily engaged in dictating letters. He had a slight headache and felt cross. And he was very busy. A boy announced that Mr. Lapidowitz wished to see him.

"Lapidowitz? Lapidowitz?" muttered Bimberg. "Der schnorrer? Tell him I'm too busy. I don't see anybody."

He continued his dictation. The events of the preceding night had not recurred to his mind. But the boy returned.

"He says he's the doorkeeper by the Yiddish The-aytre. He says maybe you remember Miss Lazarus!"

The whole situation revealed itself to Bimberg as vividly and as suddenly as if a flash of lightning had illuminated it. He felt himself perspiring from head to foot. He dismissed his stenographer, and asked Lapidowitz to enter. There was something almost sublime in the audacity of Lapidowitz. He neither hemmed nor hawed; neither hesitated nor digressed. He entered smiling cheerfully.

"Mr. Bimberg," he said in Yiddish, "you're my friend, and I'm yours. I don't like the job in the theatre, and I guess you can give me a job in your big drygoods store."

"A chob?" repeated Bimberg, blinking. "I have no chobs."

"Vell," said Lapidowitz, lapsing into Engglish, "ven a man ain't got a chob he makes vun. I did a good favour by you last night. Now you do vun by me like a good friend. Ain't it?"

Bimberg stared at him. Lapidowitz was still

smiling, but Bimberg knew enough of men to understand all that was passing in the schnorrer's mind. He felt a cold chill run down his spine.

"Der only chob vot I got," he said, "is for a man to come sometimes unt take care uf der customers' umbrellas by der door ven it rains."

"It don't rain often enough," said Lapidowitz decisively. "I got to haf a chob vot iss steady."

Bimberg scratched his head.

"Oh, don't be afraid about last night," said Lapidowitz. "I vouldn't tell Mrs. Bimberg or der rabbi or der shamash uf der synagogue or any uf der members uf der lodge about Miss Lazarus. I'm a man vot can keep a secret. But I bet you can make a good chob for me if you t'ink vunce!" Bimberg thought. He never had thought so much or so quickly before in all his life. Then he rang a bell. "Mr. Cohen," he said to a sallow-faced clerk who appeared, "gif dis man a chob in der office. He can make out der bills."

"Ve got too many in der office already," said the clerk. "Efry time I ask for a raise in my sellery you say I got too many people in der office."

Bimberg drew himself to his full height. "I am der boss," he said. "Gif him der chob!"

"Sure Mr. Bimberg is der boss!" added Lapidowitz with a frown. "You should alvays do vot your boss says."

For half an hour Bimberg sat heaping silent imprecations upon the head of Lapidowitz. And then, being really very busy that day, he went on with his work and soon forgot all about the matter.

Lapidowitz meanwhile was learning how to make out the bills. He learned quickly, and did his work neatly and well. Mr. Cohen, the chief clerk, said very little to him, but watched him narrowly. For three days Lapidowitz continued at this work, and for three days he was perfectly contented. On the fourth day he approached Bimberg.

"Mr. Bimberg," he said, "I know all about der bills now. But vot I vould like to do iss to go out in der store unt be a floor-valker. I know vare iss all der departments, unt I can do it good."

Bimberg suddenly felt panic-stricken. "But I got two floor-valkers already!" he said.

"Den you vill haf t'ree," replied Lapidowitz.

"Unt so soon I am here a couple uf veeks you can let vun go."

"V'y don't you take der whole store?" asked Bimberg.

"Mr. Bimberg," said Lapidowitz reproachfully, "only yesterday I seen Mrs. Bimberg on der street. Did I said anyt'ing to her about der the-atre? Not a vord! Unt der rabbi said to me he iss so glad you haf me in your store. Did I said anyt'ing to him about Miss Lazarus? Not a vord! Ven I haf did a favour by you v'y can't you do vun by me?"

Lapidowitz became a floor-walker. Bimberg put on his hat and coat and went to the nearest coffee-house to ponder over the matter. The longer he pondered the less headway he made. It was one of those situations that are simply unthinkable. The moment his mind reverted to the idea of his wife learning that he had written a note to an actress he could only groan. Whenever he tried to approach the situation from another direction his mind came back to his wife and the note to Miss Lazarus. And after grappling with the whole matter for half an hour and thinking around the same circle over and over again he returned to the store.

Lapidowitz made an ideal floor-walker. His

tall, imposing figure looked quite majestic when he directed an attractive-looking woman to the millinery department. He only regretted that he could not wear his silk hat in the store, for he had bought a new one, and a shining silk hat was a crown of glory in Lapidowitz's eyes. Mr. Cohen, the sallow-faced clerk, never spoke to him, but often watched him.

It was when Mrs. Bimberg herself came to the store, which she did frequently and unexpectedly, that Lapidowitz was at his best as a floor-walker. The gallantry with which he escorted her from counter to counter and the lordly manner with which he ordered the salesmen and saleswomen to wait upon her promptly made quite an impression upon her.

"You have a fine, new floor-walker," she said to her husband.

Bimberg could not trust himself to speak. He felt like a man sleeping on the brink of a volcano. But even this feeling might ultimately have passed away, and Lapidowitz, had he been content with his position, might have continued as floor-walker indefinitely. But the seed of ambition had been implanted in the schnorrer's breast. He had had a taste of authority. Ambition is a dreadful ailment.

"Mr. Bimberg," he said, one day after he had been floor-walker for nearly a week, "vouldn't it be a good idea if I vos der cheneral manager uf der store? Den, sometimes, you could take a vacation, unt I could be der boss!"

Bimberg turned pale and tried to swallow a lump in his throat. "I don't vant a vacation," he said.

"You should take vun," insisted the schnorrer. "You look pale."

"Mr. Lapidowitz," said the proprietor weakly, "gif me a couple uf days to t'ink about it. I vill see if I can do it."

Through the glass door Mr. Cohen, the sallow-faced clerk, could see Bimberg with his elbow on his desk and his head resting upon his hand in an attitude of utter dejection. He entered and closed the door behind him.

"Mr. Bimberg," he said, "you haf troubles. Unt it's all about dot loafer Lapidowitz. Ten years I haf been vit' you, unt you know you can trust me. Tell me vot iss it. Maybe I can help you. I got a friend vot iss a Irisher. Some day I ask him to come here und gif dot Lapidowitz a punch on der nose."

Bimberg gazed at his clerk. He felt so miserable that he longed to confide in some one.

He made the clerk swear on the Talmud and the Torah and on his father's grave and his grandmother's bones that he would never betray him. Then he told the story of that fateful night.

Mr. Cohen pressed his lips tightly together and nodded. "I go around to der coffee-house," he said, "unt sit down unt t'ink about it. Maybe I come back vit' a good idea."

Bimberg nodded. "Don't stay avay too long," he said. "You haf plenty uf vork to do."

The clerk was gone nearly an hour, but when he returned he was grinning from ear to ear. "I haf got it!" he said.

Bimberg listened eagerly while the clerk whispered his scheme into his ear. Then he threw his arm around Mr. Cohen's neck. "In two veeks you come to me," he said, with a happy smile, "unt ve talk about your sellery."

That night Bimberg took his wife to dinner at a restaurant. "Ve go to der the-ayter after," he said. "Mr. Cohen got a fine idea. He says der whole city iss crazy about dot Miss Lazarus vot plays in der 'Rose uf Sharon,' unt if I can get her to put on vun uf our ten-dollar

suits I can put it der newspaper unt efrybody buys vun!"

Mrs. Bimberg nodded approvingly. "It's a fine business idea," she said.

"Der trouble iss," continued her husband, "Mr. Cohen says she don't nefer see nobody except ven dey write her foolish letters. So I got up a letter vot I vill gif her to-night, unt den you come vit' me unt ve all talk business." He handed her a note that he had written in Yiddish.

"Charming lady," it ran, "you have such a noble character. I would like to get acquainted with you. I am Bimberg the drygoods man. Please meet me after the theatre and have a talk."

His wife frowned.

"You should write you are married unt got a vife," she suggested.

But Bimberg shook his head. "Mr. Cohen says dot vill spoil efryt'ing. Anyvay so soon she comes out I introduce you, unt she finds out qvick dot I am married."

"I guess you haf right," assented Mrs. Bimberg. Women, you see, instinctively know something of each other's psychology. An hour later, when the curtain had fallen on the

first act, Bimberg left his wife and went out of the theatre. The first thing he did was to tear his note into tiny bits and scatter them all over the street. Then he went to a coffee-house, drank a cup of black coffee, smoked a huge cigar, and smiled contentedly to himself. When he rejoined his wife he shook his head sadly.

"Der doorkeeper iss fresh," he said. "I couldn't see her, unt she iss married unt nefer meets nobody."

Somehow or other Mrs. Bimberg did not appear to be greatly disappointed. Women, of course, have not the same keen business sense that men have. But on the way home Bimberg remarked to her, jokingly:

"Vot vould all der people say if dey know I sent a foolish letter by a actress?"

"So long I am vit' you unt know about it," said Mrs. Bimberg, "it iss nobody's bizness!"

The next morning Bimberg called Lapidowitz into his office. "I haf made up my mind," he said. "Vait two weeks unt den I haf some-t'ing good for you." Then he sent for Mr. Cohen. "Ve must vait two veeks," he said. "In two veeks nobody knows if it iss two veeks or t'ree veeks." Mr. Cohen saw the shrewd-

ness of this and looked at his employer admiringly. It had never occurred to him before that Bimberg was clever. It rarely occurs to any employé that his employer is wiser than he.

Several times during those two weeks Lapidowitz became impatient.

"V'y should I vait so long?" he asked. "I didn't vait two veeks to make up my mind not to tell nobody about der the-ayter unt Miss Lazarus. Right avay I say to myself, 'Lapidowitz, Mr. Bimberg iss your friend, unt you must stick by him.' V'y don't you stick by me now unt make me der manager right avay? Dot floor-walking bizness gifs me a pain in my feet."

"Ven der two weeks iss up unt not before," said Bimberg firmly. He took pains, during those two weeks, to tell the rabbi and most of his friends in the synagogue and in his lodge of how he and his wife had tried to meet Miss Lazarus of 'The Rose of Sharon' Company. The day before the two weeks were up he said to Mr. Cohen:

"Tell your Irisher friend to come here in der morning."

The following morning Lapidowitz presented

himself in Bimberg's inner office. "I haf come for der chob uf manager," he said.

"I haf made up my mind," said Bimberg, grinning, "to gif yer der bounce. Get ouid uf der store!"

Lapidowitz turned red with rage. "Der bounce?" he cried. "Ha! Ha! It iss a choke! In my pocket I got der note vot you sent by Miss Lazarus!"

Bimberg rang a bell, and the sallow face of Mr. Cohen appeared in the doorway. "Tell der Irisher der time hass come!" said Bimberg.

Exactly how it happened Lapidowitz never clearly understood. He remembered that a red-haired, stocky chap who seemed made of iron had something to do with it. When he gathered himself up from the sidewalk in front of the store he saw his silk hat, crushed and covered with mud, lying in the middle of the street. He picked it up and gazed at it in bewilderment. How could so beautiful a creation as that silk hat had been, only a few moments ago, become such a hopeless wreck so quickly? At that moment he espied Mrs. Bimberg on her way to the store.

"Vot iss it?" she cried. "Did you get hit?"

"Vot it iss?" cried Lapidowitz. "It iss dot your husband sends a letter by an actress!"

Mrs. Bimberg gazed at him coldly. "Iss dot your bizness?" she asked. "Ven Mr. Bimberg sends a letter to Miss Lazarus vot I don't know about den I'd like to know it." She entered the store, and Lapidowitz gazed after her blankly. Then he went home.

EPILOGUE.

"How much iss your sellery, Mr. Cohen?" asked Bimberg.

"Twelluf dollars a veek," replied the sallow-faced clerk.

"Vell, I guess I make it t'irteen," said Bimberg, smiling amiably.

But Mr. Cohen did not smile. "Fifteen!" he said.

Bimberg looked at him. "Fifteen? Ain't t'irteen enough?" he demanded.

Mr. Cohen shook his head. "Mr. Bimberg," he said, "you know in your heart dot I never vill tell Mrs. Bimberg or der shamash uf der synagogue or der people in der lodge about der two letters. I haf been your friend a long time. I am a man vot you can trust. You better make it fifteen."

Bimberg sank back in his chair and heaved a long sigh. "I suppose you haf right," he said. "Make it fifteen!"

XV.

Lapidowitz's Partner

"FIRST he peddled shoe-strings. When he got saved up enough money to buy a push-cart he bought a push-cart. His business goes good, and he buys another push-cart. Pretty soon he has saved enough money to start a little store. His business goes good, and he buys a bigger store. Then it gets only a question of time. Bigger and bigger gets the store, and bigger and bigger gets his bank-account. Pretty soon he branches out into wholesale, and now look at him! A house up-town, a real-estater to collect rents for him down-town, a automobile, piano lessons for his daughter, and for supper every night he wears a swallow-tailer!"

Lapidowitz knew every word of it by heart. Since the night that Lubarsky, smoking a fifteen-cent-straight cigar and wearing a huge diamond in his shirt-front, had condescended to analyse to the impecunious crowd gathered

in Milken's Café the fabulous rise of Harris, the hosiery king, his words had burned in Lapidowitz's memory.

A house up-town, an automobile, piano lessons for his daughter—in case he should ever have a daughter—these things seemed to Lapidowitz to be his birthright. To wear a swallow-tailer to dinner every night seemed to Lapidowitz to be so peculiarly a characteristic befitting himself that he almost resented Harris's habit as a base imitation. And to think how simple it all was! Peddling shoe-strings was, of course, entirely out of the question. It was altogether too cold to wander from house to house with his wares, and Lapidowitz hated walking, anyway. But if he only had enough money to buy a push-cart and some goods to sell, the road to wealth and idleness would stretch before him. A push-cart and its outfit would cost about thirty dollars. Lapidowitz had about thirty cents.

For many days Lapidowitz could think of nothing else but the amazing rise of the hosiery king. The particular kind of goods that he would sell if he had a push-cart formed no part of his dream. Lapidowitz would as lief have started selling cabbages as goldfish. The

money necessary to embark upon the venture was all that worried him.

It happened, one day, that Lapidowitz found himself in Hester Street at the busiest hour of the mart. On both sides of the street, to right and to left, as far as the eye could see, stretched the long line of push-carts, nearly every one of them surrounded by an eager throng of customers. The air resounded with the chattering and jabbering of thrifty purchasers and zealous venders vying with one another in the oldest game in the world. As Lapidowitz watched the pedlars his heart grew heavy with envy. The story of Harris was vivid in his mind, and he saw in each pedlar the prospective owner of a house up-town and an automobile and a real-estater collecting rents from tenement-houses down-town. The thought that each of these men would some day be able to provide private piano lessons for his daughter was the hardest of all to bear.

Suddenly a ripple ran down the whole line of stands; there was a sudden commotion and each pedlar, seizing the handles of his push-cart, moved his outfit a few feet from where it had been standing. A policeman had come into sight, and it was in anticipation of his

warning to "move on" that all this bustle had arisen. It was the policeman's duty to permit no cart to remain in the same place for more than ten minutes, but inasmuch as some learned judge had handed down a decision that a pedlar's cart had only to move a foot or two to carry out the provision of this law and as policemen were habitually good-natured about it, the commotion quickly subsided and the traffic of the mart went on.

"Hello, Lapidowitz," said the policeman, prodding the schnorrer gently with his stick, "what's worryin' ye?"

"I got troubles, Mister Garrity," said Lapidowitz sadly.

"G'long with ye!" said the policeman. "If I had them whiskers of yours I'd be walkin' down Fifth Avenoo lettin' the ladies admire them, instid o' hangin' around here lookin' like a mourner at a funeral."

Lapidowitz looked at the policeman. He had known him for a long time and, like every one else in the Ghetto, liked him exceedingly. A sudden idea had entered his mind—an idea that held out unexpected hope—and he laid his hand on the policeman's arm.

"Mister Garrity," he said, "how vould you

like to haf a fine house up-town unt a real-estater to collect rents from der tenement-houses down-town unt a otymobile unt private piano lessons for your daughter unt put on a svaller-tailer for supper every night?"

Officer Garrity twirled his moustache with his left hand and his stick with his right. "I haven't got any daughter," he says, "but it listens good. What's the game?"

Lapidowitz recounted to him the story of the wonderful Harris, the hosiery king, and then proposed that he, Officer Garrity, should advance the thirty dollars necessary for the launching of a push-cart enterprise and that thereafter the two of them, hand in hand, in equal partnership, should follow in the hosiery king's footsteps. Like most men who are richer in schemes than in capital, Lapidowitz became infected with the enthusiasm of his own recital and grew more and more confident as he unfolded his scheme.

"What line o' goods are ye thinkin' o' handling?" asked the policeman.

Lapidowitz glanced at the nearest push-cart. "Muslins," he answered promptly. "I know all about der muslin business."

The scheme appealed to the policeman, and

for several minutes he stood plunged in deep thought and nodding approvingly at his own reflections, the while that Lapidowitz anxiously watched him. "I'll do it," he finally said. "Thirty dollars ain't a lot o' money to risk, and maybe ye're right about us both makin' a pile out of it. But I ain't takin' no chances, Lapidowitz. I'll send McCarthy, me brother-in-law, around to see ye, and he'll fix it up." Garrity winked and smiled as he said this, and Lapidowitz wondered what there was to wink or smile about.

That same night a red-faced chap with a square jaw and very impassive blue eyes called upon Lapidowitz and introduced himself as McCarthy. The schnorrer greeted him effusively and hoped that Officer Garrity was well. McCarthy gazed at Lapidowitz long and earnestly and then, without vouchsafing a reply to his friendly greeting, said:

"Where's the stand you're going to buy?"

"Oh, dot's all right," said Lapidowitz. "So soon as I get der money I go out unt buy vun."

"When you get the money," explained McCarthy, "you can do anything you please. But you don't get any money from me. If you've got a stand in mind and a supply of goods that

I can buy for thirty dollars lead me to it, and I'll see what's what."

Lapidowitz, somewhat crestfallen at this apparent lack of confidence in him, sailed forth with McCarthy, and in the course of a few hours succeeded in finding a suitable push-cart for sale with a full outfit of variegated muslins. McCarthy paid for it, and had the receipt made out in his own name. Then he arranged with a stableman to give nightly lodging to the cart and its stock.

"Good-bye," he said to Lapidowitz, when that was done. "I don't expect to see you again. Take the cart somewhere and begin selling them things. Garrity will tell you what you've got to do."

Inasmuch as Lapidowitz had the utmost confidence in himself and had carefully planned what he intended to do the suggestion of consulting his partner seemed somewhat superfluous. He wheeled his cart to Hester Street and took up his position near a corner at the extreme end of the line of push-carts on that block. Then he lit a cigarette, carefully brushed his silk hat on his sleeve, and waited for the money to roll in.

It was early in the week and a dull day in

Hester Street. A man with one eye, who presided over a load of fruit at the adjoining stand, grunted when he beheld his new neighbour.

"Haf you become a business man?" he asked, with an undisguised sneer.

"Yes, Greenspan," replied Lapidowitz cheerfully. "I'm glad you're going to be next by me!"

"For v'y are you glad?"

"Oh, I may want to leave der stand for a while, unt you can keep a eye on it."

Greenspan kept his eye on Lapidowitz unblinkingly for a long moment. Then, "I'll be glad to," said he, "ven you pay me der two dollars vot you owe me a year already."

"I gif you my word, Greenspan," said Lapidowitz, cursing himself for having taken up his position next to one of his creditors, "dot is vot I haf come by you for. So soon I make a little profit you get der money."

Greenspan, somewhat mollified by the prospect of recovering his money, began to tell how dull business was. But, even as he spoke, a woman paused before Lapidowitz's stand, picked up a roll of gaily coloured muslin, gazed at it, felt its texture, sniffed at it—did everything, in fact, but taste it or listen to it—and

then purchased six yards of it. Lapidowitz held the thirty cents that she gave him tightly in his hand and turned to Greenspan.

"Just keep a eye on der stand, neighbour," he said. "I go round der corner to get a cup of coffee."

Over a cup of coffee, a glass of Kirschwasser, and a cigar Lapidowitz began to dream dreams. It was the first time in his life that he had ever experienced the wonderful sensation of taking in money in legitimate trade, and no merchant prince ever felt prouder after selling a cargo of goods from the Indies than did Lapidowitz over his first transaction on Policeman Garrity's capital. The progressive steps of the hosiery king's rise to wealth seemed perfectly clear to him now. He began to wonder where he would open his store after the push-cart business became too big for him to handle alone. He soon dropped this line of speculation, however, for the more agreeable one of his marriage. For it would be necessary to get married in order to have a daughter who could take private piano lessons.

Meanwhile Officer Garrity, patrolling his Hester Street beat, was looking for the tall figure of his partner presiding over one of the

push-carts, and saw him not. Although there was but little traffic in the mart, every pedlar was at his stand grimly determined to let no possible customer slip by. Only one stand seemed to lack an owner.

"Who owns this stand, Greenspan?" the policeman asked of the one-eyed pedlar.

Greenspan grinned. "Dot schnorrer Lapidowitz has gone in business," he said. "He hass a customer, unt now he iss spending der money in der coffee-house."

The policeman began to twirl his club with considerable rapidity, but gave no other indication of the nature of his feelings. "I'll look for him," he said, "but before I go I've got a word for your ear, Greenspan."

He whispered in the pedlar's ear something that astonished Greenspan considerably and made him gaze at the policeman with a new interest.

"But if you ever open your mouth about it," the policeman added, "life in New York won't be worth living."

Greenspan's assurance of profound secrecy would have convinced a greater sceptic than Garrity. The policeman went to the coffee-house around the corner and, peering into the

window, espied Lapidowitz sitting inside discussing the prospects of business with the proprietor. A tap upon the pane attracted the schnorrer's attention, and he came, somewhat sheepishly, to the door. The policeman's club was swinging rapidly and somewhat aimlessly. Just as Lapidowitz emerged from the doorway it struck out so smartly upon the knee that he emitted a yell.

"Oh, did I hurt ye?" asked the policeman in a voice of solicitude, and, in a whisper, added, "Ye black-whiskered *gonif!* Is that what I'm putting up me money for? Get back to the stand, or I'll run ye in!"

Lapidowitz hastened back to his push-cart and, for a long while, rubbed his knee and cursed the policeman. Then, growing weary of standing, he seated himself upon the curbstone, lit a cigarette, and began to speculate as to whether he would take up muslins or not when he went into the wholesale business. He had ample time to speculate upon that problem, for not another customer came to his stand that day.

He had bragged so much to his friend Milken about his certainty of becoming rich that when

he went to Milken's café that night for his supper he was compelled to pay cash. The consequence of this was that all the next morning Lapidowitz was filled with craving for an extra cup of coffee. He had had a hearty breakfast, but coffee was a luxury to him—one of those luxuries that a man can conveniently put off for a few hours if he has money in his pocket, but which becomes a violent and overwhelming desire if he is penniless. Lapidowitz never remembered a time when he wanted a cup of coffee more than he did at that moment. Milken's café was too far away, and in the little coffee-house around the corner he had not yet established a basis of credit. So he tried Greenspan.

"It will make two dollars and ten cents that I owe you," he said. "I left all my money in my room."

But Greenspan only shook his head.

"You had thirty cents yesterday, and you didn't give me a cent on account. So to-day I don't give you a cent."

Lapidowitz turned his back upon the one-eyed pedlar and silently invoked every imprecation known to the Torah, the Talmud, and the Kab-

bala upon his head. And just then the woman who had purchased the muslin the day before returned and bought two yards more.

Lapidowitz's spirits promptly rose.

"Be a good friend," he said to Greenspan, in a wheedling tone. "Keep your eye on my stand, and if Garrity comes along tell him I went to the drug-store to get something for my headache. I have a terrible headache."

Patrolman Garrity was chatting amiably with Mrs. Kaminsky, who, since the day when the policeman brought home her little Max after he had lost his way, had been his stanch friend.

"And sure, Mrs. Kaminsky," he was saying, "ye look so fine in your Sunday clothes you must be going to meet your beau. I'll have to tell Mr. Kaminsky about it."

"Such foolishness!" said the portly matron. "I only go down by Hester Street to buy some muslin for a new dress."

"Muslin?" said Garrity, immediately interested. "I've got a friend keeps a stand there who's got the finest muslin in New York. Come along, and I'll show ye. I'm going that way myself."

"If he iss a friend vit' you I buy of him," said Mrs. Kaminsky.

As they approached the street-corner where Lapidowitz's push-cart stood, Policeman Garrity felt a sudden misgiving. The lank figure of the schnorrer was nowhere to be seen. Still, he might be sitting on the curb behind the cart. When they reached the place Garrity even looked under the cart.

"Where's Lapidowitz?" he asked of Greenspan.

"He got ten cents out of a customer, unt he said he was going by der drug-store." A one-eyed man cannot wink very well, but there was an expression upon Greenspan's countenance that gave the policeman an inkling of the truth. He looked in every direction to see if, perchance, his roundsman or some superior officer might be in sight. The coast was clear. Garrity picked up a piece of muslin.

"There, Mrs. Kaminsky, ain't that fine? Or maybe ye like the green stuff better. And that yellow piece with the blue dots ain't so bad. You pick out what you like, and as soon as I find me friend I'll have it cut off and brought around to you. It all costs five cents a yard excepting the pink one over yonder, but I'm thinking the pink is just suited to yer complex-

ion. Say, Greenspan, have ye any idea what that loafer charges for the pink stuff?"

Greenspan shook his head. "I only know der price uf fruits, not muslins," he said.

Mrs. Kaminsky decided to take ten yards of the pink roll, and the policeman, after looking in vain for Lapidowitz's yard-stick, used his own night-stick to measure the muslin.

"It's lucky I know the length of me club!" he remarked, with a grin. Mrs. Kaminsky was filled with admiration for a policeman who would take so much trouble to oblige a friend, while Greenspan's countenance betrayed a mixture of expressions that no psychologist could have analysed. Policeman Garrity then went to the coffee-house around the corner. There, as he had expected, sat Lapidowitz, with his silk hat tilted upon the back of his head, calmly sipping his coffee. The policeman whistled, and Lapidowitz, with a sinking heart, came out of the coffee-house. His suspicions, however, quickly vanished at the sight of the policeman's smiling face.

"Sh!" said Garrity. "I've got something for ye, but I don't want anybody to see me give it to ye. Step into the hallway here."

Lapidowitz accompanied his partner into an

And then came Friday, the gala day of the Ghetto, and business poured in with a rush

adjoining hallway where no prying eyes could look on. An instant later the schnorrer came flying out with an exclamation that sounded like a yelp of pain and ran all the way to his push-cart, where, shortly afterward, Policeman Garrity found him rubbing the back of his head. The policeman grinned.

"Lapidowitz," he said genially, "friends is friends, but partners is partners, and business is business. Remember I trust ye!"

For the next few days Lapidowitz remained true to his trust. Business continued poor, and the prospect of private piano lessons for his daughter became somewhat dimmer. Lapidowitz felt that he would be content with a house up-town. He was even willing to forego the automobile. And then came Friday, the gala day of the Ghetto, and business poured in with a rush. All day long customers stood around Lapidowitz's stand, and his hand became weary from cutting muslin; but he was happy, because his pockets were fairly jingling with money. At regular intervals Policeman Garrity came by and every pedlar had to move his stand a few feet, excepting Lapidowitz, who felt himself above the law. As a matter of fact, Lapidowitz was too busy to move, and the

approving nod that greeted him whenever he happened to catch the policeman's eye assured him that he was pursuing the proper course. Toward dusk business began to slack, and at about the same time Policeman Garrity disappeared from his beat.

Lapidowitz began to count his money, and, as he did so, a feeling of foreboding gradually settled upon him. There had been no agreement as to the financial conduct of the partnership, and Lapidowitz wondered how much the policeman intended to take out of the day's profits to reimburse himself for the cost of the stand. Slowly his wonder changed to a sensation of dread. To provide against any dire contingency Lapidowitz took a two-dollar bill from his hoard and put it into an inside coat pocket. He then divided his money into two equal parts, placing each part in a separate pocket. As he jingled these two pockets and thought of the violent temper of his partner he became distressed. There was no telling what an Irish policeman might do. After carefully pondering over all the possibilities of the situation Lapidowitz abstracted a dollar from each of the two equal shares and tucked the money into his shoe. He was still in a stoop-

ing posture when, looking up, he beheld Garrity, in civilian dress, approaching the stand.

"Let's call it a day," said the policeman. "I'll go with ye to the stable."

"Maybe ve better go around der corner to der coffee-house," suggested Lapidowitz, "unt fix up der money."

"Nix on the coffee-house," said Garrity. "We'll go to the stable."

And to the stable they went, Lapidowitz pushing the cart close to the curb and the policeman strolling along the sidewalk, chatting amiably with his partner.

"You didn't ask yet how much iss it," said Lapidowitz, smiling.

"Don't worry," answered the policeman. "I'll find out."

The smile vanished from the schnorrer's face. When they were inside the stable Garrity shut and locked the door.

"Now, me boy," he said cheerfully, "how much did ye take in? No monkey business!"

Lapidowitz dived into his pockets and produced two handfuls of money.

"I haf divided it in two parts, halluf unt halluf," he said. The policeman took both parts and carefully counted them. Then, de-

positing the money upon the floor, he held Lapidowitz by the arm with one hand while, with the other, he proceeded to investigate the contents of Lapidowitz's pockets. The schnorrer's mouth opened wide, but between fear and rage his tongue seemed paralysed, and he could not utter a word. Through his experience in searching the pockets of prisoners the policeman had acquired considerable dexterity, and, to Lapidowitz's guilty mind, it seemed as if some unerring instinct were guiding his hand toward that inside coat pocket. Surely enough Garrity found the coat pocket and found the two dollars hidden there. He threw the money upon the heap on the floor, winked gravely at Lapidowitz and proceeded with his search.

"Dot's all!" said Lapidowitz faintly.

The policeman smiled.

"I forgot about dot two dollars," said Lapidowitz.

"Sure ye did!" said Garrity. "Now take yer shoes off, and let's see if ye forgot any more."

Lapidowitz gazed at the policeman appealingly, looked around the stable to see if perchance there was an avenue of escape, and then,

with a heavy sigh, took off his shoe and handed the policeman the rest of the money.

Garrity proceeded to count the proceeds of the day's business and then handed Lapidowitz a dollar.

"Now, partner," he said, quite cheerfully, "I'm going to give you a dollar a day to keep you going. The rest of the money I'll hold until the push-cart and the goods are paid for. After that maybe I'll give ye a little more, but I'm going to be banker for the firm, and if we're going to start a store I'd better be saving money for the firm. You know you can trust me, and I guess I know how far I can trust you, but the man who got the best of Michael Garrity doesn't live." Then, clutching Lapidowitz firmly by the beard, but still smiling, he hissed, "Beware, Clarence Lapidowitz! Beware, ye black-livered spalpeen!"

When he had gone Lapidowitz almost collapsed. The schnorrer had never before heard such a fierce warning, nor was he perfectly clear as to its meaning, but it seemed to imply, to him, some horrible threat. The result was that during the next week, he attended conscientiously to his push-cart, and, with the excep-

tion of a few stolen visits to the coffee-house, did nothing to incur the displeasure of his partner. And each day he handed him the exact proceeds of the day's sales, deducting only what he had surreptitiously spent for coffee and cigars and Kirschwasser. The idea of private piano lessons for his daughter he gave up entirely. Nor was he so keen on the house uptown and the automobile as he had been in the beginning. A store with an assistant to do the work, and, perhaps, a tenement or two downtown whose rents he would collect himself, comprised the sum total of his ambition. And, to this end, he actually worked diligently throughout the first five days of the week. But when Friday came again and business grew brisk and the money seemed to pour in Lapidowitz was unable to resist temptation. Toward the close of the day's work he handed five dollars to Greenspan.

"I ask you as der greatest favour," he said, imploringly, "to keep dis money for me till tomorrow. I come by your house to get it. Der money iss sacred, holy money vot belongs to my poor sister in Russia. Unt next week I guess I can pay you der two dollars."

The one-eyed pedlar pocketed the money

without a word. Presently, however, "It iss a year dot you owe me two dollars," he said.

"I know it," replied Lapidowitz. "Only vun veek you got to wait."

"A veek? V'y should I vait a week ven I got it in my pocket?" retorted Greenspan. Lapidowitz felt a sinking sensation in his heart, and af that moment Garrity came in sight, in civilian dress, as before.

"Can I keep der two dollars?" asked Greenspan.

"Sh-h-h! Don't talk about it now."

"But can I keep it?" persisted the one-eyed pedlar. Garrity was close beside them now.

"Yes. Keep it!" hissed Lapidowitz.

Greenspan, delighted to recover his money, drew a roll of bills from his pocket and counted out three dollars. "Here iss der change," he said, handing the money to Lapidowitz. If a glance could have annihilated Greenspan, his existence would have come to an end at that moment.

"What's that for?" asked Garrity, who was chewing the end of an unlighted cigar.

"It's for his poor sister in Russia," explained Greenspan. Lapidowitz's face was a study.

"Better take it, Lapidowitz," said the police-

man, good-naturedly. "Take everything you can get."

Lapidowitz pocketed the money.

"What's the other money for?" the policeman then asked. "I heard you saying, 'Here's the change.' "

"He gif me five dollars," explained Greenspan glibly. "But he owes me two dollars, so now he vants to pay me back."

"Oh, I see," said Garrity, scratching his chin. "Well, you're a lucky man to get your money back, Greenspan. Come on, Lapidowitz. Let's close up shop and go to the stable."

On the way to the stable Lapidowitz looked at the policeman many times as if he were about to speak to him, but the grim expression of Garrity's countenance froze all speech on Lapidowitz's lips. Arrived at the stable, the policeman relieved Lapidowitz of the day's receipts. He then made him take his shoes off and his coat and vest, and these he carefully searched, humming the while a merry tune.

"So ye tried to hold out on me again," he said, quite cheerfully. Lapidowitz was too crestfallen to reply. And then, with the swiftness of lightning, the policeman's arm shot out,

and his fist landed plump upon Lapidowitz's eye.

"The partnership's off!" was all he said, and hastened out of the stable.

"Loafer!" cried Lapidowitz. "I tell der police captain! I haf you locked up right away!"

He hastened to the station house and, pointing to his discoloured eye, lodged a complaint against the policeman. The story that he told amazed the captain.

"Garrity your partner?" he cried. "In a push-cart? I never heard the like of it. Lieutenant, send around for Garrity. He'll be home for supper about this time."

Garrity, the picture of innocence, came in company with his brother-in-law, McCarthy.

"What's this about your owning a push-cart stand?" asked the captain.

"Who? Me? Me brother-in-law McCarthy owns one. Not me. Why, that chap there works for him! Hello, Lapidowitz! Where did ye get the shiner?"

It was all said in a tone of the most convincing innocence.

"I guess he's just sore, Captain," explained

McCarthy, "because I fired him to-night. He was holding out on me. I'm thinking of getting out a warrant for his arrest.

Lapidowitz began to feel bewildered.

"Were there any witnesses to the assault?" the captain asked. Lapidowitz gazed at him blankly. "Witnesses?" he repeated, in a dazed manner.

"Yes. Did any one see Garrity hit you?"

"Me hit him?" cried Garrity. "Why, the man must be crazy. I guess, Mac"—this to his brother-in-law—"you'd better get out that warrant and have him locked up. That pedlar Greenspan told me how he was holding out on you." Then, swiftly, he turned upon Lapidowitz. "Do you mean to say I hit you?" he roared, in thunderous tones. Lapidowitz turned pale. "N-n-no!" he stammered.

"I guess you'd better go home," said the captain.

It was several days before Lapidowitz reappeared in Milken's café with a bluish-greenish-yellowish eye and a story of an open door in a dark room.

"I hear you got a push-cart," said Milken. "You should get rich by it. Dot's how Harris commenced, unt look vot he's got now! A

house up-town unt tenements unt a automobile, unt his daughter gets piano lessons private."

Lapidowitz rose and strode out of the café, slamming the door behind him.

XVI

"Ich Gebibble"

WHOSOEVER lives unmarried, lives without joy, without comfort, without blessing!

So sayeth the Talmud, and the Talmud ought to know. There may be those who would dispute this proposition, but far be it from me to be among them. I merely transcribe the events as they happened.

Mr. Zabriskie had been gathered in the bosom of Abraham, and his widow sat in the shop of Brodsky, the shoemaker, wondering what she would do next. Brodsky's shop was in the basement, and the widow Zabriskie owned the house. Mrs. Zabriskie did all her wondering aloud.

"A woman has got to marry," she said finally, "that's all there is about it!"

Brodsky patched away at a sole-and-heel job.

"I know I ain't young any more and I ain't as good-looking as I used to be. But I guess I'd be better off if I got married again."

Brodsky took a peg out of his mouth and hammered it into the shoe.

"Why don't you go to Samuels, the schatchen?" he asked. "He can fix it for you."

Mrs. Zabriskie rose, smoothed the folds of her dress, and started for the door.

"I did!" she said. "But he's so busy."

The scene changes. (This idea of changing scenes is one of the consoling makeshifts of literature.) Samuels, the schatchen, sat in Milken's café, a picture of prosperity. His shining silk hat looked prosperous, his pink cheeks looked prosperous, his clothes looked prosperous—his diamond ring and diamond scarf-pin fairly radiated prosperity. The waiter waited upon him as a waiter waits upon a prosperous man. Then Bernstein entered the café and, with a weary air, seated himself at Samuel's table. Bernstein was also a schatchen but not a prosperous one. Every one knew that Bernstein was, by far, the shrewder of the two, but whereas Samuels possessed the real matchmaking faculty and could talk diffident maidens and reluctant youths into taking the matrimonial plunge, Bernstein's arguments never seemed to be quite as effective.

"How's business?" he asked Samuels. The prosperous schatchen handed him a ten-cent cigar, lit a match so that the light fell upon his diamond ring and made it sparkle, and yawned a wonderfully prosperous yawn.

"I have so much to do," he replied, "that I don't know where to begin. I hardly get any sleep. Everybody wants to get married, and hardly a day goes by without my making three or four parties. And you know what that means."

Bernstein sighed. He knew what that meant.

"I don't know why it is," he said, "but I haven't had any business for two weeks. It's funny how it goes. You're busy and I haven't a thing to do."

He hesitated for a moment and then added, "If, maybe, you got any case you don't want—if you're too busy—you might give me a chance."

Samuels nodded good-naturedly and then leaned back in his chair prosperously and stared prosperously at the ceiling. Suddenly he began to smile.

"I'll tell you where you can get a case," he said. "That Zabriskie widow wants to get

married again. She came to me, but, you know! Such a face! And she's over forty. But she's got lots of money. If I didn't have so much business I'd see what I could do for her, but I'd be afraid, just now, to send any of my parties to see her. Maybe, if you got nothing else to do you could find a party for her."

Bernstein grunted.

"The widow Zabriskie? Who'd marry her? Give me something easier."

Samuels looked at his watch, yawned prosperously again and said he had to return to his work. Bernstein remained sitting alone until he saw Lapidowitz, the schnorrer, enter the café.

"Hello, Lapidowitz!" he cried. "Let's play a game of cards."

"Sure," said Lapidowitz. "I got nothing to do."

Lapidowitz, by the way, never had anything to do. They played for nearly an hour when Bernstein suddenly laid down his cards and stared at the schnorrer.

"What is it?" asked Lapidowitz.

"H'm! I got an idea!" said the schatchen. "Will you wait here an hour until I come back? Maybe you can make some money."

"I will wait a year if I can make money," said Lapidowitz.

The scene changes.

Mrs. Zabriskie answered the door-bell herself, and Bernstein gazed at her critically, and shuddered.

"I'm Bernstein, the schatchen," he explained.

"My friend Samuels told me he is too busy to take your case and wants me to take it. Of course I'm very busy myself, but I'm always successful. So if you and me can make good arrangements I think I can get a party for you."

"Come inside!" said the widow. Bernstein listened patiently to her description of her good qualities and her estimate of her desirability. When she had finished he looked her frankly in the face.

"Mrs. Zabriskie," he said, "you ain't a young chicken and I ain't a young chicken. So let's get down to business. If you was a young girl I'd say, 'Sure!' and go right ahead. But when a lady is past—er—thirty-five (Mrs. Zabriskie nodded approvingly) the case is different. A schatchen can get you engaged but

he can't make a man marry you. It's like a horse. You can take him by the water but you can't make him drink. Now if I get you a good, nice-looking party who will get engaged to you and take you out and spend a lot of time with you, you ought to be able to do the rest yourself."

"What do you mean by the rest?" asked the widow.

"Oh, make him marry you when the time comes. You see, you're one of those ladies who improve on acquaintance, and if he gets to know you he's sure to fall in love with you. Now I'll guarantee that my party will stay engaged to you for two months. That ought to be long enough. At the end of two months you give me two hundred dollars. I consider that very cheap. If you can't make him marry you by that time it won't be my fault. So what do you say?"

The widow, with her lips pressed tightly together, nodded her head a great many times.

"I guess it's good," said she. "Maybe after two months I don't want to marry him. But if I do I guess it'll be all right."

The contract was then put in writing, and

both signed it, after which the widow poured out a glass of Madeira for the schatchen.

The scene changes.

Bernstein found Lapidowitz playing solitaire. He seated himself opposite the schnorrer, gazed at him long and intently.

"Listen, Lapidowitz,' said he. "I have something good for you. Do you know Mrs. Zabriskie?"

"The widow who owns the house where Brodsky's shoe shop is?"

The schatchen nodded.

"No. I don't know her to speak to. I've often seen her. She's homely!"

"Do you think she knows you at all?" asked Bernstein.

Lapidowitz shook his head.

"I guess not. I don't think she ever noticed me. Why?"

"Now listen to me. She wants me to get her a husband. Sit still! Don't get up! But I told her it was a hard job and now she's satisfied if I get her a party who becomes engaged to her for two months. She thinks by the end of that time she could make a man fall in love with her. Now here's my idea: if you get en-

As soon as Lapidowitz had been arrayed in his new silk hat and borrowed coat, Bernstein took him to call upon the widow

gaged to her for two months I'll give you fifty dollars! D'ye see? If you marry her or not —that's none of my business. All you got to do is to get engaged. I'll tell her you're out of work so if she wants you to take her out anywhere she's got to pay everything herself. It won't cost you a cent. You never made fifty dollars so easy in all your life."

Lapidowitz pondered over the matter for several minutes.

"Couldn't you make it a month?" he asked. "Two months is such a long time."

"It's got to be two months," said Bernstein. "But maybe, once in a while, you got important business in Cincinnati or some place, and you can get a few days off."

"It ain't a bad idea!" said Lapidowitz reflectively. "I guess I take it. Only I couldn't go without a new silk hat and a nice new coat."

"You got right," he said. "You look shabby. I'll get you a new hat, but clothes cost too much. I got a frock coat home what's as good as new, and I guess it'll fit you all right."

As soon as Lapidowitz had been arrayed in his new silk hat and borrowed coat Bernstein took him to call upon Mrs. Zabriskie. The

widow gazed at the schnorrer and smiled. Lapidowitz was not at all bad-looking, and his new raiment gave him quite a distinguished air. When the widow smiled, however, he clutched Bernstein by the coat as if he feared the schatchen were about to run off and leave him.

"This, Mrs. Zabriskie, is my friend Lapidowitz. Ain't he a fine looking man? Of course he's hard up, but that don't make any difference to a rich lady like you. Some day, I bet he'll be a rich man. Now you can both shake hands and be engaged for two months. I'll go and put it in the Yiddish papers. Ah, Lapidowitz, I bet you're beginning to fall in love already!"

He shook his finger roguishly at the schnorrer as he said this, and Mrs. Zabriskie simpered like a young girl. Lapidowitz, however, turned red.

"You ain't going away now, are you?" he asked.

"Sure!" said the schatchen. "I leave you two to get acquainted, and besides, people who are engaged should be left alone!"

Lapidowitz gazed long and yearningly at the door after Bernstein had departed.

"Let's go down to the basement," said Mrs. Zabriskie. "I want to introduce you to Mr. Brodsky. He's the first one I want to tell that I'm engaged."

"Sure," said Lapidowitz, glad of a chance to introduce a third person into the situation. "I know Brodsky well."

Brodsky's countenance did not change a shade when the news was broken to him. He looked at the widow and he looked at Lapidowitz. Then he hammered a peg into a shoe.

"That's good!" he said.

The scene changes. Bernstein sat in Milken's café, his customary lounging place, entering in his note-book an item of four dollars that he had paid for Lapidowitz's new silk hat. He also made an entry upon another page, as if it were a tentative matter, of fifty dollars that he was to pay to Lapidowitz at the end of two months. In Bernstein's system of bookkeeping there was always a sharp division between money that had actually been spent and money that he had promised to spend. A shadow fell across his note-book, and he looked up into the face of Lapidowitz.

"You didn't stay long!" said the schatchen.

"Long enough!" replied Lapidowitz. "Now, about that fifty dollar business. I wish you would give me a note for it so I can collect it in two months."

"A note?" repeated Bernstein. "Ain't my word good?"

"Sure it is!" said Lapidowitz. "Only a note is better. If I don't stay engaged for two months, of course you don't have to pay the note. But if I keep the contract, then I won't have to ask you for the money."

Bernstein attempted to argue the matter but Lapidowitz was obdurate. No note, no engagement. Bernstein gave him a note for fifty dollars payable in two months.

"We go to the theatre to-morrow night," said Lapidowitz. "Would you like to come along? I can make her get three tickets."

"I can't!" exclaimed Bernstein hastily. "I never go to theatre."

"All right," said the schnorrer. "Only one thing I nearly forgot to tell you. If you ever see us together, don't make any more foolish remarks about my falling in love with her. It gives me a pain."

After the theatre, Lapidowitz and his fian-

cée supped in a Grand Street restaurant. Lapidowitz had been absorbed in the play and had given but scant attention to his companion. Now as they sat in the restaurant, he suddenly took her hand in his and pressed it tenderly. The widow beamed upon him.

"You know what Bernstein said about my being hard up, don't you?" he asked. Mrs. Zabriskie nodded.

"Well, I am! I ain't got a cent. Maybe if you could spare a little money—oh, say fifty dollars!—as soon as we get married I can pay it back."

The widow opened her reticule and drew out a bundle of bank-notes that made Lapidowitz's heart leap with joy. With great care, she removed a dollar bill from the roll and handed it to the schnorrer with a smile.

"You got to have some money, anyhow," she said. "You don't got to pay it back."

"I said fifty!" said Lapidowitz, gazing at her with a smile that was meant to be propitiating.

"I know it," said she. "But don't be foolish."

Lapidowitz's lips moved in silent curses

upon all women in general and the widow Zabriskie in particular. He began to weary of his engagement.

The next day he found Bernstein at his customary table in Milken's café.

"I guess I give it up!" he said.

"What's the matter?" asked the schatchen.

"I ain't got a cent," said Lapidowitz. "I got to have five dollars a week to live on, don't I? Well, I know where I can get a job. So you get somebody else to be engaged to that stingy old fool."

"Can't you take the job and be engaged, too? It's only two months. And you get fifty dollars, you know!"

"Be engaged and work, too?" exclaimed Lapidowitz. "Huh! Never! If I work, I work, and if I'm engaged, I'm engaged. One thing at a time."

Bernstein made a swift mental calculation. Eight weeks at five dollars a week would amount to forty dollars. The four dollars that he had paid for the silk hat and the fifty dollars for which he had given a note would bring the total expense of providing a fiancé for the widow to ninety-four dollars. That, however, would

still leave him a profit of one hundred and six dollars, which, considering that it involved no labour of his own, was not so bad.

He made a feeble attempt to induce Lapidowitz to accept five dollars a week on account of the fifty.

"It don't cost you nothing," he explained. "I support you for eight weeks by giving you five dollars every week. You got a fine, new silk hat out of me. The lady will take you to the theatre and to the restaurants, and you will have a good time. And, in the end you will get six dollars more."

Lapidowitz gazed at him scornfully.

"I didn't think, Mr. Bernstein," he said, "that I was doing business with a cheap man. I don't get any profit just by keeping alive, do I! And I need five dollars a week to keep me alive. And you don't think I'd get engaged to that old thing for six dollars, do you? I know it's a fine hat, but—" He took off the hat and looked at it, lovingly. "I needed a new hat," he concluded.

Bernstein saw that it was useless to struggle. He handed him five dollars.

"All right, Lapidowitz," he said. "You stick to the engagement, and I'll give you five

dollars every week. Only I think you're a loafer and a thief."

"What you think," said Lapidowitz airily, "don't bother me at all."

For four weeks Lapidowitz remained engaged to the Widow Zabriskie. For four weeks he accompanied her everywhere and, whenever he failed to find an excuse for avoiding it, spent the evenings in her parlour.

Frequently he induced the widow to include Mr. Brodsky, the shoemaker, in their party, knowing that, with Mr. Brodsky present, the widow would, at least, refrain from holding his hand and would not expect any tender advances from him. One night, however, Mr. Brodsky went to his lodge, and Lapidowitz found himself alone with his fiancée. It was a rainy night and it seemed to Lapidowitz that the widow felt sentimental.

"Just think," she exclaimed. "In one more month we will be married!"

Lapidowitz felt a shudder creep down his spine.

"A month," he said quickly, "is soon gone. Let's wait a while before we begin talking about it."

"Where will we go on our honeymoon?" she asked coyly.

"Honeymoon?" repeated Lapidowitz blankly.

"Sure! When you get married you got to travel somewhere on a honeymoon. When I got married before we went to Niagara Falls."

"Oh, I've often been there," said Lapidowitz. "I got a better place in mind. But we won't talk about it until next month. I got to go now. I got a friend who is terrible sick and he's all alone. He hasn't even a doctor. So I got to stay with him to-night. I'll come to-morrow."

The widow accompanied him to the door.

"You got such a good heart!" she said. "You can kiss me if you want to."

Lapidowitz stared into her upturned countenance, shut his eyes and kissed her upon the cheek. The next moment he fled down the stairs. He found Bernstein playing cards in Milken's café and drew him aside.

"She's talking about getting married," he said gloomily.

"Well, what of it? That's in the agreement, ain't it? She can talk about anything

she likes, can't she? You don't got to marry her. All you got to do is to be engaged for four weeks more. Didn't I told you that a hundred times?"

"I can't do it!" said Lapidowitz, shaking his head. "I just can't do it. She made me kiss her to-night. Five dollars a week and fifty dollars for the whole job ain't worth it."

Bernstein felt a sinking sensation in his heart.

"Lapidowitz," he said earnestly, "are you a gentleman or a loafer? Answer me once."

Lapidowitz grinned.

"Last time," he answered, "you said it yourself I was a loafer."

Bernstein realised that it was useless to appeal to the schnorrer's finer instincts, for the simple reason that he hadn't any.

"How much?" he asked. "Make it low or you don't get a cent!"

"Twenty-five dollars," said Lapidowitz glibly. Bernstein indulged himself in the luxury of telling Lapidowitz clearly and forcibly and luxuriantly exactly what he thought of him. Milken, the proprietor, came forward and begged him to moderate his language and his tone. In conclusion Bernstein offered to

compromise on ten dollars. This time, however, Lapidowitz rose to the occasion.

"All right, Mr. Bernstein," he said, serenely. "A thief I am and a bum I am and a dirty dog I am and everything else what you said, I am. And maybe I will rot in my grave like you say and maybe I won't. But I take back what I said about twenty-five dollars and if I don't get forty on the spot, you and your old widow and your engagement business can go and bust up in the air. I said it and, what's more, I mean it. When a man gets insulted he ought to get paid. Now do I get it or ain't it?"

He got it! It took but a moment's thought for the schatchen to realise that unless he gave the schnorrer the money, he would lose all that he had hitherto given him. He apologised for his harsh epithets, he appealed to Lapidowitz's generosity and he begged him to stick to the original twenty-five that he had demanded. But Lapidowitz stood firm and, in the end, received the forty dollars.

"I hope it learns you a lesson!" he said in parting.

It did. It taught Bernstein that whenever the schnorrer came to him for money he had to

give it. If the engagement were broken Bernstein knew he would lose everything. And gradually his investment in the Widow Zabriskie's engagement grew greater and greater. In addition to the silk hat and the five dollars every week and the forty dollars, Lapidowitz borrowed more money from the unfortunate schatchen. One day it was a new shirt that he needed, another it was his rent and then again it was merely because he hadn't a cent and wanted some money in his pocket.

And Bernstein had to give. At the end of the seventh week Lapidowitz had received $150 from the schatchen. Of course most of it was obtained under the guise of a loan, but Bernstein had a perfectly clear idea of his chances of ever being repaid.

In the meantime, Lapidowitz had fulfilled his part of the contract to the extent, at least, of telling all the Ghetto that he was engaged to marry the Widow Zabriskie, of calling at her house nearly every day, and of taking her to theatre, to the restaurants, and for drives through Central Park—the cost of all of which was, of course, defrayed by the lady. The widow, herself, seemed perfectly contented with the situation. To have as good-looking a

chap as Lapidowitz dangling after her, to be able to hold his hand in public and, occasionally, to have him bestow a kiss upon her, seemed to be all that she desired. At the end of the seventh week she celebrated her birthday. It was her fortieth, she said.

"It's a joke," said Lapidowitz.

"Don't you think I'm that old?" asked Mrs. Zabriskie, coyly. Lapidowitz gazed upon her countenance and turned away to hide a smile. The widow threw her arms around his neck.

"Oh, you flatterer!" she cried, and kissed him roundly a half dozen times. But she would not lend him more than a dollar upon the strength of it. Lapidowitz sought Bernstein in Milken's café.

"Say," he began, drawing a note-book from his pocket. "I wrote down the number of times she kissed me. It's sixteen. We didn't make any bargain about this kissing business, and if I don't get a dollar for every kiss, I chuck up the job."

Bernstein almost choked.

"Listen, Lapidowitz," he said, hoarsely. "You got me in a tight place. I know you're a—a—oh, never mind! You know it as well as I do." Lapidowitz nodded. "Now, I swear

on my father's grave all I get out of this job is two hundred dollars. You got already a hundred and fifty. Next week you get five dollars because I promised it. That makes a hundred and fifty-five. Now if I give you sixteen more, it makes a hundred and seventy-one. And I only get twenty-nine dollars profit out of the whole job. Is that fair? Is it honest? Between man and man, I ask you, ain't it a dirty trick?''

Lapidowitz stroked his beard long and thoughtfully. Then he drew a pencil from his pocket and began to figure in his note-book.

''Mr. Bernstein,'' he said, finally, ''you have been honest with me. I'll be honest with you. Twenty-nine dollars is too much. Maybe you don't think so, but you ain't engaged to that widow. You give me the sixteen dollars for the kisses. Then you give me nineteen dollars more, and you don't have to give me the five dollars next week. That will leave you twenty dollars profit. That's enough. You didn't have to do any of the work. I did it all and if you don't believe it—say, I'll tell you what I'll do. You go around and kiss her, and I'll take five dollars off. You told me I was a bum and a thief and a loafer and a crook and a liar and

everything else, but if you don't like it, you don't got to give me a cent. I'll give it up right away."

Bernstein groaned and glared at Lapidowitz with an expression that made the schnorrer add hastily, "Wait, before you speak. If you get fresh I give up my job right now."

He won his point. Bernstein carefully went over the figures and then handed Lapidowitz thirty-five dollars. As the schnorrer left the café Bernstein turned to Milken, the proprietor.

"Next week," he said, "a business matter between me and Mr. Lapidowitz will be finished. And then the first thing I'm going to do is to give that schnorrer such a punch in the nose as he never had in his life."

The scene changes—and the time. The two months had elapsed. Lapidowitz having carefully framed the sentences in which he intended to tell the widow that he had changed his mind about marrying her, rang the bell of her apartment. A slatternly woman came to the door.

"It's Mr. Lapidowitz, ain't it?" she inquired. Lapidowitz admitted his identity.

"Here's a letter for you. Mrs. Zabriskie

had to go away, and she told me to give it to you."

"Dear, dear Mr. Lapidowitz," it ran, "I am sorry if I break your heart, but I can't help it. I discovered that I loved Mr. Brodsky better than my own life, so we have gone off and got married. We are going on a honeymoon to Niagara Falls, and I hope when I come back you will forgive me. I know you loved me, but who can help what the heart does? If you see Mr. Bernstein tell him I have sent him a check and I am much obliged to him. I know you will be unhappy, but some day, maybe, you will get over it."

Lapidowitz walked off, frowning. Strange to say, it was a cruel blow to his pride. But soon his brow cleared, and he began to smile. He was thinking of Bernstein, the schatchen. "Ich gebibble," he chuckled.

THE END

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